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A FULL
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
Power of Faith,
THE
Nature of Prophecy,
The Translation of
ENOCH and *ELIAS*,
AND THE
Resurrection of **CHRIST.**

LONDON:
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The "Full Enquiry into the Power of Faith"
is by W. Freke the author of the New
Jerusalem. The Allegoric Dictionary,
The Fountain of Morition & other
extraordinary works connected with
Dreams & their Interpretation.

In Freke's work entitled "The general
Idea of Allegorick Language. Lond. 1702. 4
at p. 45 he refers to an old dream of
his, printed long since, which he had in 1681
This is the very dream referred to in p. 54
of his present work the "Full Enquiry" &
settles the Authorship. which both the Bodleian
& British Museum Catalogues leave as
anonymous.

W. B. Bayly

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PREFACE.

THIS Treat, however peculiar it may seem to Christians, yet as is shewn hereafter, is not intended to exclude its self from the Use and Encouragement even of Jews, Mahumetans, and all other Professions also: The Author endeavours to open wide to all the Common way to GOD, and 'tis one end of his Writing to demonstrate that the Righteous of all Religions are accepted, and while they are sincere, have equally Right to be the Heirs of the Kingdom.

And to this purpose therefore the Wisdom of GOD, to cut off all manner of proud Cavils, for a Prerogative and Monopoly of Salvation, as he observes, seems purposely to have given us three several Examples of Translation: The First in Enoch, to convince us of our acceptance in our Natural Light. The Second in Elijah, to shew you that for all their Law of Ceremonies, yet the Jews are not therefore rendered incapable of so great a Blessing. And the last of Christ on his Resurrection, to confirm his more profitable Precepts towards this Kingdom.

I say, these three great Prophets signally in their Order exemplify to us what Religion will be acceptable to GOD in us; and methinks their followers when they consider it, need not be at such variances as they are; for in truth however diversified by Circumstances, yet in the main surely 'twas the same Faith that lead and directed each at the bottom; and the same Purity and Piety that drew down so singular a Reward and Testimony from GOD, to declare his Approbation of it.

Nor would I have any Man therefore here offended that I signalize these great Prophets thus, for it is not as with a design to diminish or eclipse the rest from their real Value, but as the more bright the Example, the clearer Pattern have we to follow; so in the Holy Ambition of our seeking to GOD, surely we cannot better fix our selves to imitate any than those whom GOD has given such his clearest declarations that he has most approved of.

And thus could Mahomet, or any others therefore teach me this Heavenly Road, I would equally follow them as Christ my Redeemer, for would they not all go the same way? And yet on the other side, shall I leave his Directions who perfected himself before me the Journey of Faith he advises me unto, to follow that Man in the Road, that never travelled throughout in it himself?

And in truth what says Christ himself otherwise to us in this matter? Does not he tell us, that 'twill be in vain for us to say, we have cried, Lord, Lord, or done Miracles, in that great day, without we have lived well, and a life of Faith also: I will not say, that any man can heartily make his approaches unto GOD, and refuse Christianity, and on that account be saved without believing Christ, or else surely the way by Christ or otherwise were all one.

Nor let any Man censure me in this neither, that I prefer Enoch and Elijah before either Moses or the Apostles, to us indeed the latter excelled; Moses as he was a Law-giver, and the Apostles as they delivered us down the Gospel of Christ; but in the real efficacy of Faith, certainly Enoch and Elijah transcended. GOD employs his Prophets in Messages, and makes them illustrious to the World, according as his Mercies to Mankind incline him; but that their Triumph in Faith is through their Piety, and their own Application.

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Thus what was it preserved Noah, and made Abraham dear to GOD, was it not Faith? So, what was it that preserved Daniel in the Lions Den, was it not Faith? I may say, are we so ridiculously Blasphemous, as even contrary to the words of Scripture, and these express Directions there, that tell us that the immutable GOD is no respecter of Persons, as to think that GOD took a fancy either to Noah, Abraham, or Daniel, as Men fondly practice; and if he did, why did the Apostle to the Hebrews then prefer Melchizedeck before Abraham, and why were they not all translated, had not their weaker Faiths fallen far short either of Enoch's or Elijah's?

And for shame therefore let us lay by all these our Youthful Apprehensions, and our petty Imaginations of Piety, which were good in their way, but now in the full light of Religion are but as Shadows to the more real Exercises of Faith: Were Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, nay, and Christ and Mahomet all true Prophets, and think you were they all present with us, they would not thus exhort us to a steady and firm Union in our adoring GOD through Faith, and seeking his Kingdom. Alas! we all vainly Cavil about the our-side and shell of Religion, like the Jews, who valued themselves upon Rites and Sacrifices, though even their own Prophets reproved their Vanity in them in respect of the real Purity of the Heart, and while we let the Devil rob us of what ought to be even infinitely more dear to us.

After all, I know nothing to be objected in this matter, but that I lay the value of Christianity low; but alas, wherein? Christ came to teach us the way to GOD, and not to save us just in believing in his Name. And as for his great Lesson of Instruction, this is it, 'twas Faith; and I endeavour to recommend no other; you say, he tells us, That he that believes not in him is damned, and 'tis true enough, and I believe the Sentence irrevocable, where Men believe not on conviction. But doth not both Christ and his Apostles inform you, that the invincibly ignorant and the weak are excused in their Blindness? Nay, and that they shall be accepted in the way they can walk, John 9. 41. James 4. 17. Rom. 2. 14, 15. John 15. 22, 24. And yet will we condemn them?

To be short, what I have wrote has been neither to abuse the Scriptures, innovate in Doctrines, or to injure our present Churches or Christianity; if it has any tendency, 'tis but to explain a Doctrine long since delivered: Dr. Taylor, in his Treatise of Holy Dying, Cap. 3. Sect. 1. p. 59. is amply express of the same mind; he tells you plainly how the sin of Adam and his Posterity not only remov'd their Immortality and Translation by Death, but dwindled our Ages in the Patriarchs, first, from near 1000 to 500 years, and thence after to 2 and 300, till it rested at 70, our present Period. Pray God for the future we prove as ready to reverse this Curse, as our fore-fathers were to fall in it.

So, what says Luther to the same effect? Does he not tell us in his Table-Talk, p. 477. that Adam was Originally designed to be translated? And so elsewhere in many places, that if he had Faith, he did not doubt but that he could do any thing. But why should I insist longer on multiplying Humane Authorities for what I hope ere this Treatise be ended, to shew as considerable from Scripture, as for any Doctrine in Christianity.

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A FULL ENQUIRY

INTO THE
Power of Faith, the Nature of
Prophecy, the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elias*,
and the Resurrection of Christ.

Of the Kingdom of God in general.

WHEN Christ entred upon his Office of Preaching the Gospel, his first Lesson was, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. 4. 17. So when he sent out his Apostles, his charge to them was, after they had healed the Sick, to tell them, *That the Kingdom of GOD was come nigh them*, Luke 10. 9. as if he would purposely insinuate something extraordinary approaching them besides his Doctrine and their freedom from their Diseases, upon his conversing with them, instructing and healing them.

I have taken the freedom therefore in this case to examine by the rest of the Scriptures what might be the meaning of so weighty an Expression: I hope I shall not err by running into an Enthusiastick Method in it; for I have resolv'd never to let my Faith run counter to my Reason, or over-reach it; and on the other side, if in the search of the Matter considerable and deep matters of Faith appear, not hitherto sufficiently regarded, I hope a modest Recommendation of the same will offend no Man.

To explain therefore to thee the scope of what I have discovered, and what thou mayest expect from me upon this Subject, I shall tell thee first what my apprehension of the words is, and after that descending more particularly into the several parts and branches of my Discourse upon it; I shall endeavour both to answer from Scripture and Reason all manner of Objections and Difficulties that may be raised against my sense of them.

As to the first thing, thou wilt find I have laid it down from hence as a certain Rule, that all Men, I mean of all Religions and Perswasions whatever, have the means in their hands, if they improve them, of reaching to and attaining this Kingdom of GOD, not only of the lower measures of Grace I mean, but the highest pitches of Glory; that is, not only of the common assistances of the Spirit, but of Prophecy and Miracles, nay, and even of Translation also; and this I apprehend was that great Doctrine of the Kingdom that Christ came to instruct us in, and that was the full and true scope both of those his words and the Gospel.

And this is that Kingdom, which, if I mistake not, he mentions in that his most excellent Form of Prayer, saying, *Thy Kingdom come*; this is that Kingdom wherein the Millenarists expect Christ's Reign on the Earth, and this is that Kingdom whereby Christ will destroy Antichrist with the very Glory of his Coming; in truth this is that Kingdom that the Apostle makes the very Crown and Perfection of our Faith, *Heb. 11. 5.*

And though there seems a possibility that with *Enoch* and *Elias* we might attain this Kingdom without such the Instruction of Christ: Yet since GOD has added a further help to the Law of *Moses*, and our Natural Light through him that was to be a Sacrifice for the World, shall we contemptuously set aside this newer Light, that has added the most lively Instructions as well as his Example to this bare Possibility and Idea of the Kingdom of GOD only?

Nor need it discourage us in this case that the Apostles of Christ wrote not much of this Doctrine, unless in repeating his words, as it was what neither they nor the World could then bear; just as *Elijah* knew nothing of his Translation till the day came, though he were a Prophet before, *1 Kings 19. 4.* and as the Spirit reveals it self altogether to our occasions; but now in the latter Ages of the World what hinders but that GOD may reveal it more manifestly in comfort to his Church, and to draw
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the Reformists or his new *Israel* from the Bonds of *Spiritual Egypt*, or Popery, and to unite and draw into one Fold all the Elect in the several Churches of the World when the Fulness of Time is come, can we think GOD will want proper means to execute his Will, when we see rather than fail, that he could make even a wicked High-Priest to Prophecy, that 'twas necessary that Christ should dye for the People.

If therefore by this little Essay I shall be able to shew this Doctrine not only consonant to the highest Reason, but the most genuine Scripture, I mean of the Old as well as New Testament, I hope no one will condemn me only for illustrating and clearing the Rays of so great a truth; nor be afraid therefore, Reader, to receive freely what I write in it, I pretend to nothing but a plain and sincere Reasoning and Exposition of Scripture by it, and I hope no way tending to beguile thee.

But if on the other side, the state of our Faith be really such as I have represented it to thee, I know not why we should any longer slight so great a truth; should we not rather courageously reflect that we have a better Country, as I have proposed thee? Here we are lyable to Wrongs, Wounds, and all manner of Accidents; and had we not better then seek for the *Spiritual Canaan*, and Pray to enter the Kingdom of GOD, where neither Vipers will be able to hurt us, Lions devour us, nor Fiery Furnaces consume us; where the Sun will be forced to stand still, and Mountains to move at our Commands, and whether Judgments threaten the World either by Fire or Water, yet at least like *Noah*, *Jonas*, and *Lot*, we shall be saved.

I know at present to believe the truth of this Doctrine is to seem contumeliously to accuse the World of Corruption, and a Man must expect a Censure and Treatment for it accordingly; and yet methinks for all these difficulties I cannot for my part but believe it, it seems so entirely agreeable to Scripture and Reason, that I could as soon not be a Christian, as not assent to it: And as for the Corruption of the World, if *St. Paul* could say of his Times, *There is none righteous, no, not one*, Rom. 3. 10. it may be no difficulty to say so now, for surely there were as good Men in the Apostles Age as ours.

But alas, what good will Apologies do one in this matter? We that have such an Infidel Generation amongst us, that 'tis even ridiculous to talk or write of either a *Spiritual Kingdom* or Faith amongst them; can one expect that either Sense or Reason can
convince

convince them, or reconcile them to an Hypothesis of this Nature ; the Resurrection of the Dead at least must and can be the only real Foundation either of Christianity, or any other Religion, for what would Precepts avail without their Reward ? I hope to God that even that does not pass to slighty by way of Figure and Allegory amongst us also.

Nor shall I wonder in this case that Men endeavour to stifle this Kingdom neither ; is not this that Kingdom that Satan has endeavoured all along to destroy, that he reduc'd unto *Noah* in the Flood, and that he has raised up Antichrist to confound ? Indeed, is not this that Kingdom that he has clouded and sealed up all along from the Wise of this World, and to which, as the Apostle observes, *not many wise, not many mighty, nor many noble are called*, 1 Cor. i. 26. And yet through which we have an assurance that he will pour out his Spirit in the latter days.

Surely therefore I may add, if ever we intend to make any Progress in Christianity, in this Kingdom it is that we must lay our Foundation, and which, as I may say, perfectly harmonizes with the Revelations both of *Moses* and Christ. I am not Superstitious, however I shall add a Modern Prophecy also about it, 'tis said to be *Witbers's*, and 'tis not unlikely ; for he not only wrote a Comment upon the Lord's Prayer to the same effect, but really his Writings shew him a Man of so admirable a Sincerity and Piety, that he seemed a proper Object for so great a Gift : But be it whose you will, the words are as follows.

*That Kingdom which the Jew did long ago
Mould out according to his erring Brain,
And whereof many Zealous Christians too
Unwarrantable Fancies entertain.*

*That Kingdom whereof now in Types we hear,
Shall to the World essentially appear.*

Now if GOD therefore has set us thus to be tryed on the Stage of this World according as we make our Attainments to this Glorious Kingdom, had we not better then with an Holy Ambition let him Glory in us as Conquerors, than become the despicable Captives of the Devil ? Not I mean, that we should be lofty or proud with this Ambition neither ; for if ever we expect to Conquer, it must be by an entire and Lamb-like Submission to the Will of GOD.

To

To be short, this is that Kingdom that we are told is within us, and that *comes not by Observation*, Luke 17. 20, 21. and for which we need not to go to the Wilderness of Teachers, that cry, lo here Christ, and lo there, for 'tis in our Hearts, and whence if we hold fast that which is good, and quench not the Spirit, but permit him to lead us through an entire resignation into all his Paths of Holy Suggestions, we must needs attain it: And whereas on the contrary, in the Kingdom of Satan, and where our Sins bear Rule, St. James tells us, Cap. 1. 13. That our Lusts will bring forth Sin, and that the Wages of Sin are Death.

But that I may the better proceed on this Subject, I shall here suppose, that there are *Of the Crises of our* two distinct great Kingdoms; to wit, the *Trial in general.* first of GOD, and the latter of Satan; as also that they have their several and distinct Crises's and measures of Judgment: But first, a little of this matter in general.

Alas! who that's either Christian, Jew, or Turk, or that but believes the Old Testament, can forbear lamenting to see the Devil's Tyranny through sin in Adam, poor, dying, deformed, and wretched Man; a Creation groaning, and longing to be delivered, Rom. 8. 22. What are our Riches, Coaches, and fine Cloaths, but as Rags to our Innocence lost? Will they avail us any thing either against Death, or Sorrow; or are they able to keep us from the Dreadful Day at last?

And yet for all this, and though that if we Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; nay, and though we have a Promise, that if we first seek the Kingdom of GOD, all other things shall be added unto it; as if GOD had expressly reversed the Curse of the Earth, and resolved rather than fail, with the *Israelites*, to feed us with Manna and Quails on our first step of retreat towards the Heavenly Paradise, Mat. 6. 33. Yet alas, who seeks to GOD, either for Eternal Life or Necessaries, as they should do?

No, we are all run astray, some one way, some another; some are drowned in Infidelity, and neither regard what either Scripture or Reason informs them; others are perfectly, stupidly negligent, and regard no more what yet they cannot but believe, than a fair Story that they have heard with delight. And yet the Spirit of God warns us all, and so leaves all inexcusable to their Condemnation.

And hence also it is that every Man whatever has his hour of Visitation, and which will and must certainly continue to lead him right, and that even to perfection, if he follow and not resist it. And hence every Man I see methinks shews me an Angel or a Devil, in making some moving on to one degree of Perfection, and others to another, while others starting aside like a broken Bow, and uneasy to follow the leading of GOD's Spirit, proudly seek Devices of their own, and so are lost in their own Contrivances.

So hence 'tis that others making their application imperfectly to GOD are forced to be purged for it through Martyrdom or Death, when could they learn with *Enoch* but to walk perfectly with GOD, canst thou think, Friend, that he would let them dye? No, know GOD is no respecter of Persons, the whole course of Scriptures, besides general Texts, witness it, *Ephes. 6. 9. Acts 10. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 17.*

And yet beware how thou rashly attempt this, for know these Glories are defended by a fiery Tryal, and before thou attainest them thou wilt find a real Fight of Infidelity, Pride, and Inconstancy, and a terrible one too; thy little seekings of Curiosity and Passion will not avail for this Kingdom, no, 'tis worthy of thy Constancy; and therefore such Lusts thou mayst be sure will but obstruct thy proceedings.

Take care therefore and purifie thy Heart thoroughly; for know as thy great Conflicts will be between GOD and thy self in private, where no body sees, and where you will be forced to fight your way through Principalities and Might to the Kingdom of GOD, and wrestle with the Powers of Darkness, *Ephes. 6. 12.* So you must expect to be most exactly pure, for that alone can support you, and which if you are, you need not fear any dangers; nay, rather thou mayest joy against Satan, when he brings his Temptations to destroy thy Hopes, for if thou thus trust in GOD, they must advance them, *2 Cor. 12. 9.*

What shall I say then, if Christ for these Reasons, has assured us that the Kingdom of Heaven has through his *Exhortation.* Instructions and Example suffered Violence, and may be taken by force? Nay, if he himself has gone the way before us, why should we longer obstruct so great a Grace, by delighting to welter in our Iniquities? Perverse Man, that will not skill his Seasons of Grace; Man, more sottish than

than Birds or Beasts; they know their Times and Seasons, and follow the Instincts of their Nature, but Man will not follow the leadings of the Holy Ghost.

We dare not trust the words of Christ our Saviour; like *Martina*, we will not neglect our Temporal Affairs, though but a little, to get the one and great thing necessary, *Luke* 10. 42. much less sell all, to purchase the Field where we find the Precious Stone of Life hid: We dare not venture to lose our Lives for Christ's sake, and the Gospel's, though if we do, he has promised us, that instead of it we shall find them; *Luke* 9. 24.

Nor is this a work of Learning to baulk Men neither, indeed Sincerity is all in all in it, and 'tis offered to all alike; in truth the Kingdom of GOD is within us, and our Thoughts must Conduct us right towards it if we are but exactly sincere: And hence also, as *Withers* excellently says, the true and only Method to Prophecy is but to retire alone, read the Scriptures, and contemplate; and 'tis only our Corruptions that hinder us, or else I might add, our own very Hearts would lead us right.

'Tis true indeed, we ought not to slight any further help that is offered us, especially if it come from GOD, but else Natural Religion alone were enough: We see Christ was poor, and I believe *Enoch* had very few or no Books, and yet they both attained it; alas! we would persuade our selves that it is harder than it is, and when indeed GOD in Justice makes the offers of his Salvation to all in common, and not to the Rich and Learned only; if he had, Christ had never given them so many Woes as he did.

Come then, my Brethren, I mean of all Religions, eat of that Bread of Christ, more excellent than Manna, and that will not let you dye, *John* 6. 49, 50. 58. and drink of his Fountain of Living Waters, *John* 4. 14. Venture to purchase that Field, where his great Treasure lyes, and beg of his Leaven to purifie your Hearts; be not so unjust as to charge all the Follies of Men as Imperfections in Christianity.

Nor be afraid of the Hardships of singular Truth, Christianity it self is no suffering Religion; 'tis Sin only draws down our Afflictions, or else Christianity would make us Immortal: What therefore though GOD hide his Face from thee for a time, yet he is still near thee, and cannot forsake thee. So, what though a *Shimei* mock thee by chance, bear it but as from GOD, and

as there is no Accident before him, so thy Faith thus in every Cross and Curse thou hast will but hasten thy Tryal.

And so, what though thou wilt scarce perceive when thou enterst this happy and invincible Stage of Faith, yet despair not; and if thou be but found doing good, thou needest not fear it, though Christ come as a Thief in the Night; nor be dismayed at delays, for though GOD will try thee first, ere he confirm thee in it, by Dream or Vision; yet if thou prayest and livest exactly, thou art not surer even that thou art, than that thou art entred, and if thou humbly persevere, thou wilt, nay, must Conquer.

What, have we not near an Hundred times in Scripture Promises, that if we ask and seek, it shall be given us? And shall we only despair at and refrain seeking the Kingdom of GOD? And that we are principally commanded to ask.

Of our Evil Crisis. Nor is our Evil Crisis in this case less certain than our good; for as it were to Blaspheme God's Justice, to say, that St. Paul's Conversion which he had because he erred in his Zeal ignorantly, 1 Tim. i. 13. and Cornelius's Vision was accidental, or Moses's Burial by GOD himself, or Christ's Resurrection at three days by chance; so were it not less a guilt to say, that even the Punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Flood, the Canaanites, Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, were Arbitrary, and without exact Justice. What, shall Christ tell us, that GOD has a care even of the very hairs of our Heads, and of Sparrows, and can we suppose him Just, and yet wanton in such a Destruction of Man? Nay, indeed do not the Scriptures assure us, that he waited till their Iniquities were at the full?

So undoubtedly also there is a set Bound of Corruption, even to Witchcraft; and though till such as Job's and Saul's Afflictions, we are seldom at the bent of such Tryals as to consult Witches, and to curse GOD to live; yet remember that when such Tryals come, even the best shall not be spared if they fall; for as even Lucifer fell, and Moses was shut out of the Land of Canaan for his sin, so if thou sling not thy self wholly upon GOD in these Tryals, thou wilt assuredly miscarry, whether thou forbear in Pride or heedlessness, 'tis all one, there is a Tempter too subtle for thee; and whereas if thou relyest on GOD, thou canst not possibly be too weak for his Grace.

And

And the better to keep thee from this Presumption, remem-
ber therefore that even Christ himself, the Son of GOD incar-
nate, was forced to learn this Obedience, and seek to him with
strong crying and tears for his Kingdom, *Heb. 5. 7.* And yet be
not dismayed thereat, for for all that, thou must certainly over-
come if thou walkest but upright; nor fear if thou trust in
GOD, he will not let thee be carried away with the Wiles of
Satan; no, he will secure thee so, that no catch of a Tempta-
tion shall be able to surprize thee, *2 Cor. 4. 7, 8. — 12. 9.* But
then, as GOD told the Jews, 'tis not for your deserts, but from
himself alone that he blesses you: So that after all, we must learn
from Christ to say, that we are unprofitable Servants, and ad-
mire his Goodness only.

By this time I hope therefore that you believe that neither
Christ, nor his Apostles, nor the Prophets were
favoured in their Tryals; indeed that they had *God's Imparti-*
several Commissions was as the Wisdom of GOD *ality.*
directed, but that they became Prophets was,
that they improved that Grace of GOD that is offered to all
Mankind in common; and hence 'tis that we are told, that
Christ himself was exalted for his Righteousness, *Heb. 1. 9.* and
was to grow in Wisdom, and through bitter Temptations to en-
ter the Kingdom of GOD: And hence also the Apostles, who
had a peculiar advance in Faith through Christ's Instructions, yet
after all were forced to attain it through Watching and Purity.

And hence it was, that after *Moses* and Christ had opened the
Kingdom of Heaven through Faith, many others took courage,
became Prophets, and followed them: Whereas after a dead
Infidelity has once invaded the World, it has required the pe-
culiar care of Providence to renew our Faith again; for though
by chance GOD in Mercy may have given Visions and Re-
velations even to Children and impure Persons, for the sake of
others, and as indeed he did once by an Ass, yet a full and
perfect source of Prophecy is only attainable through a real
Purity.

But you will say, did not GOD particularly *Objections.*
favour the *Israelites*, whilst he cursed *Esau* and *Ca-*
naan? No, as to Temporalities possibly he might, *to it.*
but as to the main current of his Justice 'twas as sincere to the
one as the other: Thus he would not expel the *Canaanites* till
their Iniquities were grown to the full, and *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*
had

had not been destroyed, had there been but five Righteous Persons remaining therein; and even the Old World had the Patience of GOD for 120 Years ere they were destroyed by the Flood.

I see the matter, we would fain excuse our Lusts, and sling all on GOD, we would fain make his ways unequal, as the Children of *Israel* did about the four Grapes, when they aspersed GOD, that the sins of the Fathers set the Childrens Teeth on edge. But what, are not these Calumnies false, and have we not reason on the contrary to be even ravished with the unspeakable Love of GOD?

But to illustrate this the better, shall not GOD bestow one or five Talents on whom he pleases? Shall the Stone complain that he is not a Plant, and the Horse, that he is not a Man, or the Man, that he is not an Angel? Or what, ought we not rather all to joyn together to be thankful for the Bounty of our Maker? At this rate, like *Lucifer* else, we shall endeavour at last to be our own Carvers even of the God-head also.

I say then, if GOD gives him that has one Talent a fair Tryal as well as him that has two, or him that has two, a fair Tryal as well as him that has five, have they reason to complain? no surely. Nor is this our case neither, for GOD is more good than so; he has promised to increase our Talents likewise if we use them well, and if so, where is the least room for these Calumnies? Have we not rather reason to admire the infinite, and unfathomable Mercies and Judgments of GOD?

Nor is the Objection from the Parable of the Labourers of any obstruction or difficulty in this matter neither, for what though as our Saviour therein tells us, that he that comes in to work at the latter end of the day, shall have his Penny equally with him that bore the heat of the day; must that destroy the degrees of Glory, which his Apostles also have revealed unto us, and which he himself also has declared by his Parable of the Talents? No, rather every Man shall answer for his Improvement only, and live longer or shorter, or work more or less, yet shall no such accidental Advantages benefit or injure him, but only his true and real advance through the Grace of God.

But you say, GOD protected *Moses* and Christ from their Infancy; and why not? Where he has sown an extraordinary Seed of many Talents for the good of the World and his own Glory, may not he justly in such a case also give notice of the birth

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birth of such a Seed ; nay, and give it an extraordinary Preservation, and that without the least prejudice to his Justice in their Tryals ?

Thus could *St. Paul's* peccoliar Call keep him from working out his Salvation with fear and trembling, *Phil. 2. 12.* and Praying, and keeping his Body under, lest whilst he Preached, he himself should be cast away, *1 Cor. 9. 27.* Thus, could *Lucifer's* Height secure him, or *Moses's* Revelations bring him into the Land of *Canaan* ? Or to put the Argument to a higher Topick, will you question that Justice that even the Devil does not, who upon his certainty of its sincerity ventured to tempt even our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus ? No, no, the ways of God are too immutable to be drawn aside at any time into petty shifts and by-ways.

Nor on the same Account may we safely venture to Judge any Man ; what, do we not see that greatest Sinners every day Repent ? And does not the Spirit often choose unlikely means to Worldly appearance, lest therefore like those who would not let even that great Prophet Christ Jesus have Honour in his own Country ; let us forbear to censure and judge the Mercies and Judgments of God, which are unfathomable : Let us not look therefore on what Men are, or have been, but what they may be.

Upon the whole matter therefore, if God usually lets the Father's Ignorances descend on the Son, according to his Fourth Commandment, and as we feel to our sorrow through the Fall of *Adam*, and his Piety come as a Blessing to increase the Talents of his Generation, as he did in *Abraham*, yet if he allows them equally fair Tryals, is he not Just ? And if he gives him that has one Talent five for the Improvement, or takes his away quite that abuses them, is not this Just also ? O the wonders of the Mercies and Judgments of GOD ! who can sufficiently admire the Mercies, or dread the terrible Justice of our God ?

And yet though the Scriptures, in pursuance of this Doctrine, acquaints us, that we shall not all dye, *1 Cor. 15.* as if the wickedness of one part of the World should draw down immediate Judgment ; and of the other side, its Purity should attract Translation at the Consummation of all things : Yet for all this we may assure our selves, that this Conquest must be by a Gradual Access. Christ tells us, that the Kingdom of GOD is like a Seed sown, that springs up we know not how.

*Of our gradual
access herein.*

We

We must not expect therefore to jump out of one state into another, whether into Miracles or Translation, but to proceed by degrees, and as our time of Tryal will lead us; for as *Nemo repente fit turpissimus*, so *Nemo repente fit optimus* is as true; and as if there were an Hundred Journeys to the Kingdom of GOD, so we must have an Hundred rises and Stonds in Prayer and Purity ere we can receive our Crown.

We may see at first that *Adam* was intended for a tryal of time, as he was to be Fruitful and multiply ere he was to be translated; and if he, as made a Prophet, was in a state of delay, what must we expect then that are a compleat Stage below him, and that require as long a time ere we can be Prophets also? Surely, I say, we may well have Patience; would we travel our two long Journeys in a Minute, or perfect such a Stage in an Hour?

And thus, suppose our state to Prophecy required Ten Years the perfectest application to GOD, and in the absoluteest resignation after we are adult, and as indeed seems rational enough in the Age of Christ; and so I say, suppose the like time were allotted for our Stage of Translation also, could we be so unreasonable as to be angry at this Bound of Tryal set us by God himself? Or should we not rather patiently wait the leisure and Laws of our Purification in it?

Had we not as rationally expect an Infant to be a Man, and an Acron to be an Oak in a day, and so over-rule all the Laws of Heaven? Surely we had: And if so, why may not we have the Natural Patience of all things? Nay, and since we see that even the very World its self is forced to grow old, and purifie it self thus by degrees.

But what, after all dost thou think that thy Tryal proposed is tedious and difficult, and that the many miscarriages of others quite discourages all thy Endeavours towards it? Alas! thou forgettest that Gold is not Gold till 'tis tryed in the Furnace; and our Sovereign Maker in all the Justice of the World has reason to take us for no other than tinsel and dross for all our gawdy and gilded appearance of Uprightness, until we have stood a due shock of Tryals and Temptations; and after all, who shall say to God, that Justice is not an Attribute worthy of the goodness of the Divine Majesty?

Besides God is more good than to leave our gain so desperate too, he has reserved many lesser Measures, and lesser Crowns, and

and degrees of Glory for them who with hearty endeavours fail of attaining the highest. And what then, though thou art not one of those ones of Myriads that have attained Translation, or those ones of Millions that have attained to be Prophets; *David* could rather desire to be a Door-keeper in the House of God, than a Prince in the Tents of Wickedness.

So further, remember that if thou dost set about this great Work, that thou do it not like the Sons of *Zebedee*, by seeking the chief place only, leave that Ambition to GOD, and if thou dost so, and dost well, 'tis impossible but that by degrees he must give it thee: Nor be grieved that GOD does not immediately appear to thee by Vision or Revelation; remember 'tis in Mercy, that he will not lead us further than we are perfect, lest we be destroyed: The Offences that in the Vale of Ignorance are light and trivial against the full Glory of GOD's Revelations and Commands, magnifie like *Achan's*, *Corah's*, *Dathan's*, and *Abiram's*. Remember *Judas*, and *Lot's Wife*, and that if we there fall away, we must never expect to be renewed, *Heb. 6. 6.*

Take care therefore, for as at best GOD will frustrate all such Superstitious Expectations of Faith, so if thou hast no other Bottom than such Stubble and Straw of Curiosity to trust to, thou must expect that when GOD's purifying Fire comes, that though thou art raised even as high as *Lucifer* in thy conceit, yet all will consume and fall, yea, and thou with it; nay, and that though thou raise thy *Babel* a Thousand times, if it does not do worse, and run thee into Enthusiasm and the Delusions of Satan.

And yet for all this thou must still work it out with Patience; thou must not think now only to aim at a Tabernacle here, and with the Faith of *Abraham* and the Patriarchs rest at a Pilgrimage in this World only; for though *David* and others were Men in their time, and Light after GOD's own Heart, yet now we have a more perfect and holy Example, to wit, Christ Jesus, a Priest after the Order of *Melchizedeck*, that never dyes, and greater than *Abraham*, *Heb. 7. 3.* So that now we are without Excuse, if that we only seek an Earthly *Canaan*; for to what end does Light come into the World, if we still remain in Darkness?

But you will say, the Apostles attained not hereto, and yet were very Holy Men; and what then? Do they not all confess themselves the imperfect followers of the great Pattern Christ Jesus? I might judge that it was

their Contentions and Propriety in Conversions that kept them from their growth in this Kingdom; but I forbear to censure, as I am sure if I do, I cannot be certain, however by the effect 'tis plain that there was something wanting in them, as there was in their casting out some Devils, that they could not but by Fasting and Prayer, *Luke 9. 39, 40.* But I leave their Judgment to GOD.

To proceed therefore, thou must not for all this let theirs, nor any others failings make thee forbear thy hopes for Purity and Happiness; no, as I have said, let GOD be true, and every Man a liar; Nor fear, for if thou art exactly sincere, thou must conquer; nor be dismayed that thou hast hitherto lived in sin, for Christ has shewn thee by his Parable, that though thou come in at the latter end of the day, yet 'tis all one; indeed 'twill be thy pitch and continuance in Faith, that will be all in all.

But thou art a *Jew or Turk*, and canst not meet with Reason sufficient to Convert thee to Christianity: And what then? If thou followest it but in this alone, and art sincere, and art not wilful in thine own Ignorances, 'tis impossible but that thou must Conquer; and rather than thou shalt fail, of a necessary truth, if thou persevere in this course to seek the Kingdom of GOD, and conform to an exact Scrutiny of Truth, even GOD himself will reveal it to thee, as he did it to St. Paul and Cornelius, *1 Tim. 1. 13. Acts Cap. 9, 10.*

Let us chearfully then set about this great Work, and try to Rival one another in it, and in who can help each other most towards it; let us Pray without ceasing, *1 Thess. 5. 16.* and let us add to that a purifying Industry, that we may not tempt GOD; are we not Cowards to let *Enoch* and *Elias* through the Law of Nature, and a Law of Ceremonies and Shadows enter this Kingdom, whilst we are shut out, that not only have the Example, but the most particular Instructions of Christ to help us towards it?

You Object, That the Translation of *Enoch* and *Elias* was not on this Account, but rather with the Resurrection of Christ, to give an Ocular Demonstration to the several Ages of the World of the Immortality of the Soul. But why should you surmise thus? Do the Scriptures say thus? Nay, do they not plainly say the contrary, and make all the meer effect of Faith? *Heb. 11. 5.* If so, then let us no longer lye Idle, and be thus deceived with the

the appearance of Truth only, let us embrace the Scriptures thoroughly, or reject them wholly.

But alas, in truth the thing is our Lusts are in our way, and we resist the leading of GOD's Spirit, and so it is that he is forced to perfect us as high as he can; alas, we are so far from moving Mountains, and making Iron swim with our Faith, that with St. *Peter*, we sink the first step we take on the Water; we have not the Faith even to give us a Mortal *Canaan*, or to make the Walls of *Jericho* fall; how shall we then expect the Spiritual *Canaan*, and the New *Jerusalem* amongst us?

But as we can't 'tis our own fault, and only ours; we will not follow the Spirit of GOD, I am sure that he tries us ere he leaves us, and meerly the cunning of the Devil cannot supplant us; is he nigh us? GOD is nearer, and thou canst not fall but by thine own privity; but when instead of Industrious following GOD's leading Methods to Wisdom, through Meditation and Conscience thou resist them, do you think you do not stop up your own way?

And from this wilful and perverse Spirit of Infidelity it is that GOD has been forced, as I have said, once in 2000 years or less, either to destroy the World, as he did by the Flood, or else in Mercy to raise up some new Patterns of Faith to lead us again; and thus he gave us *Moses* and Christ, after both whom some afresh begun to serve GOD in Purity, and to become Prophets also; but alas, how soon are we returned, like the Dog, to his Vomit, and sunk into our old Infidelity again?

In truth one may justly say of the best of Men amongst us now adays, they entertain so many Vertues, and so many Vices, so much Piety, and so much Sin, and which continually encounters with one another in them; if Vice prevails, he is mostly wicked, if Vertue, he is our good Man. O that we could but say of any of us, that Sin and Vice were quite extinct in us, at least as to our will, if not to frailty! for then, with *Enoch*, might we be truly said to walk with GOD also.

But besides this I may add, and what, shall we never learn, with the blessed *Simeon* and *Anna*, and *Joseph* of *Arimathea*, purposely to wait with a due Patience for the Kingdom of GOD, *Mark* 15. 43. *Luke* 23. 51. If with them we do not happen to rise to the greatest Perfection, yet at least we shall find that GOD at last will accept us, and bless us for our hearty endeavour's sake as far as they reach, and surely that will be better than a dead Infidelity.

Come unto Christ, then, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, for his Yoke is easie, and his Burthen is light; indeed you need fear nothing under his Conduct, as heavier Scholars indeed GOD pricks us forwards through Afflictions, but if we sincerely endeavour to be perfect, he cannot but take them from us; for then even Angels will deliver us out of Prison, Ravens will be forced to feed us, and the mouths of Lions will be stopt against us, only Christ suffered in this state of Purity, and that for our sakes, and by his own consent; he not only tells us he could have more than Twelve Legions of Angels to help him, if he pleased, *Mat. 26. 53.* but even his Persecutors were forced to go back and fall down from his Presence, ere they could seize him, *John 18. 6.*

As the All-just GOD therefore cannot inflict the Punishment or Purgation on those that walk as pure already, so let us learn to cherish this little Mustard-seed of the Kingdom of GOD till it become as a Tree, and wherein all the Vertues of Divinity and Morality may flourish, *Mark 4. 32.* *Elijah* destroyed *Abah's* Guards, *Moses* drowned *Pharaoh* and his Host in the Red Sea; and we have a Promise even to bind Kings in Chains, and Princes with Links of Iron: And think you not that these things were done, and these promises made for the Example, and the Encouragement of the Saints?

'Tis true, *St. Paul* by his being wrap'd up into the third Heaven, and *St. John* by his having the Revelations given him, seem only of the Apostles to have made their approaches near this Perfection; Transfigurations and such Visions being the usual dawnings of Translation, as Divine Dreams are of Prophecy: And they failed too, but what if they did, were they not Men as well as we? They had a greater measure of Christ's help and Example indeed, but what, is GOD a respecter of Persons? And have we not the same offers of Grace, and as fair a Tryal given us, as ever they had?

For shame therefore let us serve GOD with all our strength, and all our might, *Mark 12. 30.* and so recommend our selves more nearly to his Protection, and that can only be through a vigorous Faith. The Scriptures have told us already, that Faith without Works is dead; and I shall add also, that Works without Faith to lead them are dead also, I mean as to the Kingdom of GOD. Without Faith 'tis impossible to see or please GOD, whereas our Faith,

Faith, if it be strong, it must prevail; nay, and though it be erring, if not wilfully, as appears by *Cornelius* and *St. Paul*, *1 Tim. 1. 13.* Whereas on the contrary, if it be strong and evil, it must needs draw down Enthusiasm and Delusion upon us.

And hence it is that our Saviour tells us, *That all things are possible to him that believes*, *Mark 9. 23.* Indeed he says, *Had we the Faith of a grain of Mustard-seed, we might at a word remove this Sycamine-tree, or Mountain, and cast it into the Sea*, *Luke 17. 6.* And hence it is that, *O ye of little Faith*, is almost his constant Expostulatory upbraiding throughout the whole Gospels, *Luke 9. 41.*

Hence likewise it is that his Apostles after him, when they had their Faith once strengthened in themselves to move it in others, tell us, *That whatsoever is not of faith, is sin*, *Rom. 14. 23.* So also that Faith was imputed to *Abraham* for Righteousness, *Rom. 4. 22.* And therefore to use their Argument, though at the time of our Ignorance GOD winked at us, yet now he expects we should Repent, *Acts 17. 30.* and remain in our dead and brutish Infidelity no longer.

Nay further, this Faith of the Kingdom of GOD is the only real and excellent Faith; to believe barely in Christ, and that he was crucified, is no more than what the Devils believe, and yet have still reason to tremble; but to believe in him, and to act pursuant to his most excellent Doctrine of the Kingdom, and to lead good Lives, is to follow the design and scope of his Gospel, and is that active Faith which only has the Promises of Salvation.

But why do I remain on the brink of my Argument thus? Hath not Christ even expressly promised, *That those that keep his sayings, shall never see Death?* *John 8. 51.* And *that those that believe in him, shall never dye*, *John 11. 26.* but *are passed from death unto life*, *John 5. 24.* And doth he not expressly limit this Death in his Discourse to our Life in this World as well as the other? *John 6. 49, 50. 58.* Nay, has he not promised us more, that we shall do greater Works than he himself has done; and really whatever we shall ask in Faith, *John 14. 12.*

As Sin therefore is the Road to Death, as also Grace is to Life, *Rom. 5. 21.* So let us through these Encouragements of Christ learn to avoid our Sins and Lusts, which run us into Sin and Death, *James 1. 15,* and follow those ways that lead us to Holiness.

Time and Life. The Apostles that could not get out of Prison themselves, yet through the Prayers of the Church had their Liberty, *Act. 12.* And can you think, that had they purified themselves exactly, as Christ did, they would not have opened the Prison Doors of themselves, as well as *Elijah* destroyed *Abad's* Guards? Yes, undoubtedly they might, and God shewed exact measures of Justice in all these Events, or else 'twere impertinent, nay, impossible that these things should be written for our Example and Encouragement; and what needed else that Christ and his Apostles so wonderfully magnified and exhorted to a Powerful Faith, as is done especially, *Heb. 11.* if the Precepts they left were only just designed for themselves to follow?

But then withal we ought to remember, that it is not our Faith at spurts and times, though never so lively, but 'tis our constancy in it, that is to bring us to work these Wonders: And thus it is that such a Faith is only of effect, that Rules our Actions as with a Law; that stands firm, though ruffled by disappointment, and that dares laugh at Crosses, and whom no outward Stay can fail; we must not, with *David*, against GOD's Command number our People, as if we would repose on an Arm of Flesh; but we must learn with a generous freedom readily and wholly to obey the Commands of GOD, maugre all Fears and Disappointments whatever, and then we need not fear but that in due time we shall even wrap up our selves into Immortality.

And thus also what though thy frailty make thee to continue to sin, yet despair not, but resolve at least to be good through GOD and Christ, nor judge thy Faith through little Doubts and transient Despairs incident to the frailty of Humane Reasoning, but if it has all along influenced thee to be Active and Faithful, scorn even all the Arts and Wiles of Satan to discourage thee. What, wilt thou let any Creature out-vye thy Constancy? Wilt thou see the Sun and Stars continue their courses and lustres in Obedience to their GOD, whilst thou only forgoest thine Holy Faith and Integrity?

Though as a Woman conceiving, and in Travel therefore thou art forced to bear many a bitter pang, ere thou arrive to bring forth this Son, yet at last doubt not but that thou wilt have him; I mean him that shall be able to Rule the Nations as with a Rod of Iron, *Rev. 2. 26, 27.* and that will not only be
able

able to deliver thee, with *David* and *Jonas*, from *Goliath* and the Whale's Belly, but even give thee the power of Tongues, and of feeding Multitudes too, if occasion.

But thou doubtest thy assurance in these things: And what, cannot Examples satisfy thee? Surely that *Enoch* and *Elijah*, and Christ after his Resurrection were translated, were Evidence enough, did we weigh matters justly; besides, if we enter the Kingdom of Heaven by the reverse of the Fall of *Adam*, and as is most rational, can we think GOD so cruel, as to require the Punishment after the Purgation? Or can we Blaspheme so, as to say, he has made us naturally incapable of that Perfection he requires of us? Nay, or can we have any regard to the Promises of Christ, who has assured us, that whoever keeps his Sayings, shall never see Death, and doubt it?

What shall I say then? Could GOD grant these Favours to some Men only, and not be partial? Surely without we will Blaspheme him, they are in the power of all to seek and have; and if so, what though you have few Talents, as I have shewn you, use them but well, and you have a Promise of Increase: And what though you are tempted, fear not, for from St. *Paul* you may learn that the Grace of GOD is sufficient for thee. So, what though God hide his Face from thee, without thou forsakest him he cannot leave thee, in truth he is nearest when seeming furthest; so that if thou art lost in this matter, 'tis plain it must be wilfully and knowingly, and not by Accident, for otherwise GOD's Veracity cannot let thee fail.

If thou once layest hold therefore on the first Link of this Divine Chain, the Holy Spirit must needs lead thee right; and if thou pursue the other Links he shall carry thee to, faithfully and courageously thou must ascend; but if you let go or stop, 'tis your own fault, and you must expect either to fall into a despair, or at best that the Holy Ghost cease to raise you higher, and endeavour to purify you as high as he can: Whereas if thou art but once truly and thoroughly prepared, thou needest not fear either Dangers, Misfortunes, or Temptations, for as GOD cannot but secure thee from them if thou relyest on him in them, so their seeming hazard in a perfect Faith thou mayest assure thy self will but hasten thy Tryal and Victory the sooner.

Nor be concerned at the meanness of thy Person whoever thou art; for as Christ himself was a Carpenter's Son, at least in Repute and Education, so though thou art even a Slave, GOD will:

will admit thee heartily a Freeman-Workman in his Kingdom; nay, he'll accept thy constant Meditations towards it if thou halt no other leisure; and no matter whether thou be Eloquent or Foolish in thy Address; so thou be but sincere, GOD like a tender Father will as well hear thy stammer'd Prayers as those of his most learned Sons: We see by the choice of Christ in his Apostles, that none are contemptible to GOD, and that even Fishermen, if they have good Hearts, shall be preferred before either the wisest or the wealthiest.

But you expect clearer grounds than these you say, for such a Perfection as Translation: I answer, was not Christ to be our Pattern and Example in all things? And if he was, was not he translated? 'Tis true, he dyed first, because he came purposely into the World to be our Sacrifice, and to obtain the Second Covenant, *Heb. 8. 8, 9.* But you see for all that, that Death could hold him but three days, and *Enoch* and *Elias* obtained it without.

And besides, why doth Christ all along exhort to a powerful and operative Faith? Indeed Prophecy, Miracles, and Translation seem now all equally impossible, but that is from the want of our Faith, or else why should it not seem as possible for a greater Faith to attain Translation, according to *Heb. 11. 5.* as for a less to reach Prophecy or Miracles? Surely it seems easier in its self for GOD to keep us from Death altogether, than to raise Men again so Miraculously as he did, from the dust of the Grave at the Death of Christ, *Mat. 27. 52.*

But you will say, we are naturally Mortal: And was *Object.* not *Adam* so, who was created to subsist through eating and drinking as well as we? And if he through the Providence of GOD was capable of being preserved Immortal till he fell, as seems the very purport of the Scriptures, have we any reason to despair the same Care or Power? Is either the hand of the Lord grown short, or can his Loving-kindness ever fail us? Surely that our Lives are short, as they are, is in great measure to be attributed to our selves; do we not see how we might prolong our Lives, if we were careful, as *Galen*, and many others have done by their Temperance before us?

With a like Reason also you wonder to see the Destructions of Death, the Ravages of War, and the Blood of Massacres. Alas! you should rather wonder at the sin of Men, that will not let them perfect themselves above these things, and leave those
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sins to the vengeance of God, that ought to be purged through our own Industry : While we continue under the Curse of Sin, and have nothing in us like the Life of Faith, Death is justly our Portion, and what Injury is it that GOD in his Providence takes us out of the World, either single, or in multitudes, as he is pleased to introduce any new Scene or Change in the World by it, since we all alike deserve Death?

And just so also as Infants and new-born Babes God is merciful in withdrawing us from the Miseries of Life, besides that Death is our Portion, and our common Curse to expect, till Faith come in, and by the Power and Justice of GOD entitle us to Immortality : Saith the Scriptures, *The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt dye* ; that is, thou and thy Posterity shall become Mortal, and as we find we are ; but does that imply that an exacter Purity and Obedience when we come to the Age of Discretion shall not through Faith reverse the Curse of *Adam*, and carrying us first back again into the Spiritual Paradise, restore us to the Tree of Life also?

Christ indeed doth not seem so much to declare such an Immortality the immediate effect of Faith as Miracles ; but why ? Because he leads his Disciples to the lesser degrees of Faith first, and instructed them as their Capacities could bear, or else he doth not neglect Instructions even to Immortality neither ; but we see what Encouragement such a forward Truth as Translation was like to meet with, when the *Jews* not only reviled him for pretending to it, and that he should be greater than their Father *Abraham* that dyed, but even many of his Disciples also left him upon it, *John 6*. And surely then he had great Encouragement to Preach so forward a Doctrine so soon.

Besides he knew that as they grew more in Faith, that GOD would either reveal this to them, or that they would know it of course ; so that if they but improved their growth in Spiritual Wisdom through an exact pursuance of GOD's Holy Suggestions, 'twere impossible that they should ever have miscarried.

Nor need we wonder that GOD has only revealed these Truths to those that have so industriously served him, no, and that though they were even Apostles ; do we not see the Example of this even in *St. Peter*, who for the sake of *Cornelius* was forced to have a particular Revelation to assure him that GOD was no respecter of Persons. So that well may we miscarry if

we take not the pains to work out our own way, what, would we have GOD alone do all for us?

Let me therefore hearten you to this great Victory by that gracious Promise of our Blessed Saviour, Rev. 2. 26. *And to him that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the Nations: And he shall Rule them with a Rod of Iron: as the Vessels of a Potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the Morning-star.*

But thou wantest immediately to be at *Visions and Miracles*, and to see the Credentials of Prophets: Alas, beware lest thy impatient Pride hurry thee to Enthusiasm; remember that as thy fond Passions cannot raise thee in the Kingdom of GOD, so if thy Sincerity be entire, thy little involuntary lapses of frailty cannot hurt thee; but yet as thy constant application in Purity will carry thee to Heaven, so a lasting and settled, proud, presumptuous Curiosity must needs hurry thee to Enthusiasm and Delusion.

What, don't we find that 'twas the Practice even of Christ himself not to attempt any thing in Faith till his time was come? Nay, was it not one of the very Temptations of the Devil to him, to set him presumptuously to turn the Stones into Bread when he was an hungred in the Wilderness, before his proper season of Miracles? Yes, surely it was, and that God who has so freely helped and delivered his Servants in their real distresses, is not less averse to those that have presumptuously neglected his ordinary means in an Ambition of extraordinary.

Learn therefore with Patience to expect thy growth as a Child, and to wait such Credentials when GOD shall see fit to give them, remember that as to have them before thy time were to destroy thy Tryal, so even to desire them were a sin, as crossing the Will of GOD, and to which we ought at all times to pay the most entire Submission: 'Tis true, GOD has promised us, *That our Old Men should dream Dreams, and that our Young Men should see Visions*; but yet 'tis fit then that we should wait the leisure and performance of the Condition first.

Besides we want Revelations, Visions, and Apparitions, but what for? Only to ask wanton Questions of the other World, when we forget that such a Curiosity is presumptuous, and that we ought to acquiesce wholly in hearing our Message. Or what is it that we would seek by them, only to know our Duty?

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As to that, Christ tells us plainly, that if we cannot believe *Moses* and the Prophets, neither shall we one from the Dead; *Luke 16. 28.* Should an Angel appear to us he could not alter Truth; nay, and we forget that *Satan* often appears as an Angel of Light: So that all we can expect from such a Curiosity, is but to draw down the Delusions of evil Angels amongst us.

So that you see GOD may deservedly Punish this wantonness with a want of Vision; we may prepare our selves not to be ignorant of the Voice of GOD when he speaks indeed, as *Moses* and *Samuel* were, but we are to expect to be always left and tryed in doubts whilst we rest in the Pilgrimage and Wilderness of this World: Indeed it has been the common condition of the Just to live by Faith, *Hab. 2. 4.* and till Death or Translation we must not expect a certainty or perfection: What, is not our very Being in Flesh, as the Apostle says, by design also to be as absent for the Lord?

And thus, had not Christ himself his hours of Temptation as well as Vision, and shall we pretend to an Exemption? No, we must expect them in all states; till our state of Prophecy, indeed our Tryals are more dark, as encountring chiefly a brutish Infidelity, but after that, even in Revelation, they are not less dangerous, and when, like Christ, and *Adam*, and *Eve*, we are turned loose to the Personal Wiles of *Satan*.

But you would know how Dreams and Visions are to be known and trusted: As to that you must beware of a presumptuous Curiosity of all kinds, for in those things you gamble out of the Road of GOD; and therefore if he leave you to Evil Angels, you need not wonder: And so in all other Methods, whereby you shall shew your self uneasy at the leisure of GOD's Tryals, you ought to dread your state for fear of some dreadful Judgment of Enthusiasm.

But if on the contrary you know your self Innocent in your Conscience from such a Presumption, you need not fear but that whatsoever Dream or Vision you have that appears to be good, must come from GOD, and as it Commands you, you ought to obey it; for as the Scriptures declare, that GOD often leads Men by Dreams, so that plainly implies, that he requires us to obey them where he gives them; and why should we be in any danger in the case? Cannot GOD secure us from the De-

visions of Dreams as well as he has done from the other Temptations and bodily Injuries of Satan, if we forfeit not his care?

And hence it is that GOD will be plain with us beyond presumption, where he requires such Obedience; nay, if his Message be surprizing or extraordinary, as he did to *Moses*, he will give thee a Miracle rather than fail to confirm thee in it; but be sure then he will never Command thee to do a Moral Evil, to reject Humanity, or to commit Barbarities, such are Delusions, under what colour soever of Revelation they may appear.

Nay, and that such Divine Assistances are not quite Novelties even in our Ages, you have not only Bishop *Usher's*, and *Witber's's*, but the Eminent Judge *Hale's* Authority to assure you, and yet not but that though such are Blessings which GOD may give us in Grace and Mercy to support us, yet they are not to be expected, much less desired, without the greatest Submission and Resignation to the Will of GOD imaginable.

The *Jews* were sick of this Curiosity, and desired Signs without end; and even we also, were we humoured to see an Angel once, in a little time should have the same Curiosity again, and to what end? Only to furnish our selves with so many Stories, and to bring such Sacred Benefits into Contempt, or to resent to GOD how uneasy we are at the Trials he has set us here, and contrary to his declared Will how fierce we are for Fruition and Perfection.

Alas! not only when it pleases GOD to bless us with such Private Revelations, they are designed wholly for our private and singular Comfort, but we are both presumptuous and profane, without special Order to publish them; for what is it to another the private Evidences of Grace and Favours that have happened between GOD and our selves? Nay, and do we not follow the Example of *St. Paul* in this, who you see would never reveal the extraordinary private Visions that he declares he had, in his Epistles.

And just with as much Reason is it that we are endlessly vain in our desires of such things, we forget our Presumption in desiring more of GOD than his Wisdom sees fit; was GOD ever Prodigal of his Visions to any of his Prophets? Or did he give them rather rarely, and as his Love to them or Mankind required? And if not, what is it we aim at? A Prerogative above whatever any other enjoyed before us, and what is beyond those

those fixed Bounds of Tryal which GOD has set for the best in this World?

But to return, how many are there that on the contrary, like the unbelieving Lord at *Samaria*, are trod under foot in their growth, through their Infidelity? And so haughtily obstructing the first entrance of the Holy Ghost, cut off all their hopes of their Progress in Piety; I may say, can you expect that GOD should proceed otherwise than gradually with you, and not trust you with greater Talents, but according as you manage your less? And if you can't, as he dealt not otherwise with the greatest Prophets, how do you think to walk by Faith if you sink the first step you go?

We have sundry Examples in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, of Dreams, some plain, and some Hieroglyphical, wherein GOD has required Men to pay him Obedience, but especially in *Daniel* the Prophet. I say therefore, if such Prophetical Dreams are only discernable from others by the Rules I have before shewn, 'tis plain then that where we find Dreams within such limitations, we ought to obey them in every thing that is not evil; nay, and that with our greatest Skill, and without Tempting GOD to an unnecessary Miracle where he Commands us.

But what shall I say? Some Men by a bold Assertion, and a Spirit of Infidelity, will not only tell you, that all Dreams are, meerly Melancholy Fancies, and thence neither discernable good from bad, nor regardable, but more, that they may level us in common to Bruits, they tell us, that even Dogs dream: And though themselves see that Dreams are involuntary, and out of the power of the Soul, yet the better to flatter their own Infidelity, whether with Reason or without, 'tis all one to them, they attribute all meerly to the power of Nature.

But methinks it should be convincing enough to any Man in this case, to see that all Men Dream not, and that none can Command the time or thing they dream of; so that GOD affords us but rarely Commanding or Active Dreams, because as good ones we deserve them not, and as evil ones in Mercy he protects us from them; indeed in our Dreams he often lets Satan tempt us by our Lusts and Fears, and the Fathers of old have taught us to Pray against such his Evils, but that always in such a giddy and incoherent manner, that it speaks its self a Delusion, and from the Devil.

And

And lastly, That the Evil Angels should give Bruits Dreams to cherish us in our Infidelity, seems no more strange to me, than that GOD once opened the mouth of an Ass; for if not only GOD is so careful of his Creation, as not to let an hair of our Heads, or a Sparrow fall without his knowledge, but even the Devil is so indefatigably Active to Torment Mankind, as rather than fail, to enter into a Serpent to tempt us: Can we think, I say, among other Stratagems he would not stoop even to give Dogs Dreams also, when by it he can give so good an Argument and Support for Atheism? And yet even this Satan cannot do without leave, we see he could not enter the Herd of Swine, much less shall we suppose him able to delude or possess a Man without express Authority from GOD?

But methinks I hear it objected, What Guard have we then against Enthusiasm? I say, as good as is agreeable with GOD's Justice, and our Tryals:

The Scriptures tell us, that the Devil often appears as an Angel of Light, but that does not shew that therefore we have no Power through God's Grace to discern him; indeed through our Pride, or other fault, GOD may leave us; and so we may be deluded; or else 'tis impossible: So that indeed 'tis justly to our Perils not to discover Faith from Presumption, and Revelation from Enthusiasm, nay, and 'tis what God may most justly require at our hands.

In Enthusiasm the Faith is excellent and strong, but the edge or end of it is perverted, so that any Man may easily judge whether he is in Enthusiasm or not; if in his Zeal he errs wilfully, 'tis fatal; but if ignorantly, like St. Paul and Abraham, he need not fear but that GOD will rather by a Miracle save our Son, and Convert us, than let us suffer damage; but then if with the Jewish Exorcists, and Simon Magnus, with the love of the World in our hearts, we seek to hold the Truth in unrighteousness, methinks we have no reason to complain that our desires have succeeded against us, and we are lost in Enthusiasm.

And yet not but that there are extreams on the other side too; there are Men that lye dead in Forms as well as such as are mad in Superstition, and that have not Patience for their Tryals; nor are they less to be reproved for burying their Talents, than the others for making every whimsey that crosses their Thoughts to come from GOD; I must confess the latter is chiefly proper to my Subject here, and yet the former also stands justly in my way of Reproof.

To

To return therefore, how easie a Test have we against any man's pretence for feeling Truth? Alas! GOD's Holy Suggestions and right Reason are never discernable asunder, we are only to know Trees by their Fruits, and not to believe even an Angel from Heaven, if he Preach other Doctrine than Truth; what hazard are we at then, whether a Man be an Enthusiast or not, if we follow him with a blind implicit Submission, indeed we are, but we ought to be always on our Guard, and to have such a Respect for no man's Person.

And thus though 'twere the Devil that perswaded or convinced me of my Duty, as 'tis said of *Luther*, I would not neglect it, not but that I would perish too before that I would seek to him for it: And on the contrary, were I sure he were an Angel or a Prophet that perswaded me to what I knew, or but thought in my Conscience to be evil, I would certainly disobey him.

What danger have we then left of falling into Delusions? Or what good will even the confidence of a Mountebank do our feeling Enthusiasts? Alas, nothing but betray them. GOD's Spirit is meek and lowly, he tells us, that he resists the Proud: And hence *St. Paul* says modestly in one place of his Epistles, that he believes only that he has the Spirit of GOD, *1 Cor. 7. 40.*

And had not our new Spirit Men, that I am perswaded have not his Warrant, better say ingenuously then, that their Silence and Meditation leaves room for that Holy Spirit, whose Assistance they hope they may have, at least in some degree, rather than by an haughty and proud Arrogance thus burst the growth of those Holy Seeds, that ought only to be cherished through Humility? Nay, and do not they as good as grant this, when they not only say, they do, but even we see that they err grossly in their best Exercises?

If you will be free therefore of Enthusiasm, beware of this Pride, and beware of a proud and needless Separation from others on the too common, but groundless pretences that we are more Holy than you. 'Twas prophesied of old, that we should not be able to endure sound Doctrine, but heap up to our selves Teachers having itching Ears, *2 Tim. 2. 4.* But remember 'tis no slight Offence to forsake a Publick Church too easily; 'twas what all the Corruptions of the Jews could not make Christ do, who always Taught in their Synagogues and Temples, *John 18. 26.*

Publick

Publick Communion is so Sacred a Bond, *Heb. 10. 26.* that nothing I know but flat Idolatry, with *Elijab, Shadrack, Meshack,* and *Abednego*, is able to excuse thee from it.

Besides consider how many GOD has laid his Judgments on for this separating Pride, and how he has often let the Devil inspire them instead of the Holy Ghost ; nay, and remember too that Christ made it his business to converse with Sinners, and thou for all thy Pride art but a Man, and much meaner sure than he ; and if so, as all Mankind are thy Brethren, at worst they require thy Advice and Reproof ; and fear not, like *Lot* ; thou wilt not be the sooner destroy'd for living amongst them, if thou continuest pure thy self ; but if having but a seeming Holiness thou glory in a proud and uncharitable Singularity, know that Delusion will ruine thee. The Soul that has not a Love, Faith, and Purity as large as GOD's, at least in good will, has not his Spirit.

By what has been wrote therefore I think it is plain, that our discerning of Spirits is no such Work to be despair'd at as is suppos'd if we keep our selves but pure : Our Wickedness indeed may forfeit God's Protection of us, or else we may be sure he will not let us be fool'd out of the Glory that he has prepared for us : And thus as GOD ordinarily has appeared to his Prophets both by Dreams and Visions, and as he did to *Adam* in Paradise ; so he requires our Obedience to them also as he has done with them, and as well he may where he has done but the same to others ; and I say, it is justly also even at our Peril to discern Faith from Presumption in them, since we cannot be deceiv'd but thro' our own fault and neglect.

As I have said before, Certainty and Perfection belong only to Translation and Fruition ; not, I mean, that if we trust wholly in God we are at any hazard neither ; as GOD has promis'd us not to let us be tempted beyond our Strength, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* And surely we may let GOD be true, tho' every Man be a Liar : But we must learn from thence to abate all overweening Pride, and for our own Safety in pursuance of our Trials, to resign our selves wholly and entirely to the Will of GOD.

And thus had the Magicians exceeded *Moses* in Wonders as much as there were hundreds of *Baalites* to one *Elijab*, yet *Moses* and *Elijab* (tho' the only Prophets of GOD left) must needs be discernable thro' their Sincerity : And that Man or Prophet that
shall

shall unsincerely and disobediently hearken even to a true Prophet against his known Duty and Conscience, shall have a Lion provided to tear him in pieces in his way as he returns; and as even the Scriptures themselves have given us in Example.

To be short, we may conclude upon the whole matter, that not only if we obey not the lesser and first tendings of the Holy Spirit, we are weak to expect the greater, but we are presumptuous also if we seek greater certainty than others have had before us. Suppose I am to obey GOD on these terms, do I hazard more than others have done before me? And thus could it be any thing but the Innocence of *Moses* in his own Conscience that could assure him that the Angel that appeared unto him in the Bush, was not other than an Angel of Light? And shall I expect then to trust GOD on surer grounds? And even so in Natural Religion also, I have full as good a Warrant in obeying an upright Conscience as the best of Prophets can have in following his Revelation.

Further, by what has been wrote also, we may see what Authority and Regard we are to pay even the Scriptures themselves. Thus in whatever words the *Of Scripture.* Prophets or Apostles wrote, as they had them from some Vision or Revelation, or from Christ, we ought to pay them an absolute regard, as coming immediately from the Spirit of GOD himself; but whatever Truths they delivered prudentially, and as from their own Reasoning, we ought to take them as such, and wherein we have the Advice of the most Holy and Sincere Men, and as the Apostle *St. Paul* himself acquaints us.

And hence also we see plainly that the Apostles not only advised to study, *1 Tim. 4. 13.* and understood Christ's words by degrees, as the Spirit occasionally operating with their own Reasoning explained them, but even in their Citations out of the Old Testament, they both trusted their Memories, and rather regarded sense than words; and hence *St. Matthew* cites *Jeremiah* for *Zecbariah*; and hence *St. Luke* is so modest, that in the very beginning of his Gospel he rather shews you that he writes to be credited as a fair Witness, than one that in every word would Command you by an Infalible Inspiration.

Not that I would insinuate hereby by any means neither (as the Judicious *Louth* in this case has very well observed) as if the Inspiration of Holy Writ were imperfect, or that the Scriptures

were not a most perfect Rule of Faith: Surely they mad, that once believes the History of the Apostles Miracles, can ever think their Doctrines were not thereby confirmed by God: But whether such Testimony of God must argue their Inspiration *Verbatim*, or their Instruction of us to a literal Infallibility (as he likewise observes) let the Reader judge.

Nay, and besides I may add, for the Holy Ghost to have made the Prophets and Evangelists his Secretaries *Verbatim*, would not only have done violence to their Tryals, but were to no purpose neither: For what needed he to have shewn those things by Revelation, that Reason could find out? So also if he had dictated to them *Verbatim*, as Truth is one, and Wisdom is one in Perfection, so it were impossible that there should be a letter varying in what they wrote; nay, and if he had, why should we think of them, that they should rather only Historically deliver the Precepts of Christ then, than dispose them in order, and as from themselves, had not they thought that his Authority in giving them was greater than their own?

And so what but this Fallibility was it, may I say, made the Apostles meet together to dispute in Council, had they, like the Prophets in their particular Messages, gotten GOD's immediate Instructions in all things? One had spoke the Mind of all, and there could never have been any occasion to assemble to dispute, since they could never vary in Judgment, but like our Saviour, who had the Spirit without measure, they would have proceeded on in Eternal paths of Love, Truth, and Unity.

Nor is their Credit even as thus, and from their very Sincerity little, as it is, as a Heathen reflected, when he read their Morals, *I wish all the World had believed them*. So indeed they have such an Integrity, that they cannot but command a Respect where ever they come. And as for their Errors and mutual lesser Variances, they rather benefit than injure them; for where there is a fallible Integrity that varies in Trifles, and agrees in the Main, it even lustres Truth, by cutting off the very grounds of all Suspicion and Confederacy.

We ought therefore always to remember, as well in the Writings of the Apostles as Prophets, rather to follow their sincere sense and purport, than their Grammatical and forced Expositions; for not only the Apostles, as I have shewn you, have cited the Old Testament by their Memories, but even the Prophets also, as *Luther* observes in his Table-talk, p. 362. had none of their

their Revelations *Verbatim*, but when they delivered their Visions, did it in their own way, and their own stile and words; thus one as a Noble, and another as a Husbandman, and if they had any Expressions immediately from God, 'twas very rarely.

And hence also you see that the Prophets were so far from an absolute Inspiration, or a perfect Freedom with GOD, that very often they could scarce understand the dark and Hieroglyphical Prophecies they received themselves, and whether they did at all in some cases, I will not determine; for though all Prophecies can have but one clear, sincere, rational, and coherent meaning; as Truth, especially in the Fountain, is not doubtful; and as so they were dictated by GOD to be understood one time or other; yet it does not follow therefore that they must understand them, for surely he may justly reserve their Interpretation to what Time or Season he shall think best.

Nor is this an inconsiderable Lesson that we may learn from a due consideration in this matter, for surely it must make no small tendency to the Progress of the true Gospel-Precepts and Piety, to cut off all occasion of little Capricios and Criticism; the great and main Lesson of Christ and his Apostles, and what was truly confirmed from God by Miracles, is too well and securely delivered, to be injured by little Cavils, or the variance of Copies.

But to return, as to what may be more particularly said relating to the state of Prophecy, we may add, that, as I have before observed, *Adam* was to stand a *The State of* while e're he became translated; and if so since *Prophecy*. the degradation of our Fall, we may well expect even to stand a further Tryal also, e're we become Prophets; thus Christ was near Thirty e're he entred his first Stage, and *Enoch* and *Elijah* not young when they were translated, and can we expect otherwise then? Nor need we to be dismay'd though we have no notice of our being either to be Prophets or Translated, had *Adam* either such notice in Paradise, or *Elijah* almost to the very day?

Nor is it unworthy Observation in this case how like and parallel the course of *Moses*, *Christ*, and *Elijah* has been. Say the Scriptures, *Moses* is not a Prophet in dark Dreams, and Visions only, but God spoke clearly, and Face to Face to him, and did he not so to Christ and *Elijah* also? So how exactly likewise *Moses* and Christ agreed in their Transfiguration, and Christ and

Elijah in their Miracles; one raised the Dead, and so did the other; the one multiplied and fed with Bread miraculously, and so did the other; the one was translated, and the other ascended into Heaven within a very few days after his Death, nor had he dyed, had it not been fore-ordered.

Nor could they that would have imitated these Patterns have failed, had they taken more care to have purified themselves, and to have been more curious in that one and easie Rule, to choose the good, and avoid the ill, think you else that *St. Peter*, *St. Paul*, and *Silas* might not have been translated, as well as *Elijah* a Jew; had they but laid by their Animosities, *Acts* 15. 37. *Gal.* 2. 11. and other faults, for surely both as Christians they could not deserve less, and Translation in its self must needs be more for the Honour both of GOD and Christianity, than Martyrdom.

But what, you are offended that I take these Liberties with the Apostles; you forget that though they had the Spirit, yet was it but in part; they knew in part, and they prophesied in part; nay, and their Gifts sometimes vanished away: So you forget that even the very best of them were forced to work out their Salvations with fear and trembling, for all their gifts; nor need I say thus on presumption only, for do not the Scriptures say the same thing, *1 Cor.* 13. 8, 9. And do they not shew us, that they that had the Gifts of Tongues, did sometimes abuse them? *1 Cor.* 14.

God is not lavish in his Gifts, though he is liberal; so that though he give his Graces on occasion, yet he suits them to Times and Seasons of his own; nay, and though by us he informs the World of their Duty, yet he takes care withal by his Information never to give us such a certainty as may destroy our Tryals, by Faith, and from this Fallibility it was that *St. Paul* ordered the Spirit of the Prophets to be subject to the Prophets, and that he advised *Timothy* to Study and Reading, *1 Tim.* 4. 13. and prudentially to drink Water with his Wine. Indeed, as I have said, what need had the Apostles and Prophets of a *Sanhedrim* and Council, if that they had had all things immediately inspired from GOD?

In truth, if we would but open our Eyes, we might see these matters beyond doubt: Thus nothing is plainer than that *John the Baptist* knew not Christ by sight, though he knew of him by Revelation. So nothing is more evident than that *St. Paul* could

could call the High-Priest a whited Wall in a mistake, for all that he had Christ's particular Promise to be helped before Rulers.

In short, this Argument needs no other Evidence, unless it be for those whom none can convince. Shall the Scriptures tell us, that even the Angels are impure in the sight of GOD, and shall we be afraid to charge Men with faults? Indeed could Christ himself be in such doubts, as to want an Angel to comfort him, and to cry out, *My GOD, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken me*, upon the Cross? And may we not charge his Disciples with weaknesses?

But to proceed, not only single Persons, but even Churches also may arrive at the state of Prophecy, if they are but Pious accordingly: Thus what were the *Israelites* but a Generation of Prophets? And had they not been rebellious, instead of their perishing in the Wilderness, and their having a Ceremonial Law, and an Earthly *Canaan*, as a School-Master to bring them to the Heavenly Faith, *Gal. 3. 24.* who can doubt but that they might and would have arrived there themselves?

And hence methinks I dare rationally Prophecy, That if every Government shall heartily seek to GOD, and by a perpetual Reformation, and Address through Prayers seek the Kingdom of GOD, they shall not only be able, like the *Israelites*, to divide the Red-Sea for their Passage, and to have their Cloaths not wax old, and Quails sent them by GOD himself, rather than fail, to nourish them if occasion be, but they shall even almost infinitely exceed their Type in *Israel*, and by degrees become more Glorious than now our very Thoughts can comprehend.

Then, as the Prophets have foretold us of old, will the happy time arrive, *when Nation shall no longer rise against Nation; nay, when the Lion and the Lamb shall be able to lye down together in safety; then shall our Swords be beaten into Plow-shears, and our Spears into Pruning-hooks, while Truth and Peace shall kiss each other, and Righteousness shall even run down our Streets in that Kingdom.*

That, when e're it comes, will be Christ's Glorious Day, and that which *Abraham* rejoiced to see: That will be the time the Devils dreaded so long since, when they asked Christ, whether he was come to torment them before their time? That will be what must needs end in the Glorious Sabbath, which St. *John* by the

Revelation

Revelation leads the Churches to, and of which though as yet we have no demonstrable Interpretation, yet the very Glimpse we have of it, is enough to encourage us towards it, though without a precise Resolution.

But in short, what-ever Church aims at this, must do it heartily, or else 'twill be all in vain; for until they have wholly laid by their Self-love, and seek purely for the Glory of GOD, they can never rationally expect so peculiar a care from GOD, for surely in this the Poet is right, *Veniunt ad Candida testæ columba.*

Nor wonder at these things, for if *Witbers* prove a true Prophet, as hitherto he has been, there must be such a change in the Church as this e're long; and that you may the better know how you are to expect it, I shall add these few Verses, taken out of his late Collection of Prophecies, and that were Dedicated to the Convention in the Year 1689.

Pag. 3.

*And then shall Righteousness ascend the Throne,
Then Truth, and Love, and Peace re-enter shall;
Then Faith and Reason shall agree in one,
And all the Vertues to their Council call.
And timely out of all these shall arise
That Kingdom, and that Happy Government,
Which is the scope of all these Prophecies,
That future Truths obscurely represent.*

Pag. 20.

*Be patient therefore, ye that are oppress'd;
Thy Generation shall not pass away,
Till some behold the Downfall of the Beast.*

Pag. 30.

*But if that whereof some imperfect views
Far off appears, accordingly ensues;
There will to thwart their hopes, a new Star blaze
Within the West, which will the World amaze,*

And

(37)
*And influence through the Universe,
So quickly and prodigiously disperse,
That aided by concurring Constellations,
It will have some effect upon most Nations,
And cause such Changes, as will make a stand
To those Attempts that they have now in hand.*

Meaning the Papists. See the Prophecy at large.

But not to rely on *Wishers* only, do not the Scriptures say the same thing? Does not *Daniel* Crown all with this Kingdom of GOD at last? *Dan. 7. 27.* And does not Christ tell us, that the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be Preached to all the World, and then shall the End come, *Mat. 24. 14. Mark 13. 10.* Nay, and do not the *Revelations* end in the same manner, with an Angel to Preach the Gospel to every Nation, *Rev. 14. 6.* and with a New *Jerusalem* to descend from GOD?

Indeed because the Scribes were so wicked, as to shut up the Kingdom of GOD, so as neither to go in themselves, nor let others enter, *Mat. 23. 13.* Infomuch that Christ says of them for their perverseness, that the Publicans and Harlots entered the Kingdom of Heaven before them, *Mat. 21. 31.* The Kingdom of GOD was given from the Jews to another Nation, *Mat. 21. 43.* and whereupon they have been accursed, and dispersed throughout the World, as we see even at this day.

But can that be any discouragement to us? Should it not rather move us to be that Happy Nation that should take their place? But then, as *St. Paul* warns us also, we ought to walk humbly upon it, lest we that are grafted in the place whence the Natural Branches are cut off, should upon our becoming unfruitful, be cut off also. GOD has performed his Promise to *Abraham*, though many Ages after, and blessed all the Nations of the Earth through him; nay, and blessed his Seed in their *Canaan*. Let us not despair then, and he will be as good to us if we obey him; if not, we may reasonably expect his Curse, or worse, on the slighting of his offers.

But further, have we not the Apostle's Word for our happy Success in Translation, if we proceed thus? *1 Cor. 15.* where he tells us, *We shall not all dye, but be changed.* And as he more expressly shews us, *1 Thess. 3. 17.* where he tells us, *That we shall be caught up alive to meet the Lord in the Air:* And indeed as if the Crisis of Purity should hasten that of Impurity, till at last the
force

(30)
force of the first draw down Judgments on the other, and that saying should be fulfilled thereby, 2 Thess. 2. 8. *That the wicked one should be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming.*

To conclude, I have added this other Prophecy also, taken out of the same Book, to shew that GOD has even designed this Happy Nation for this Blessing; I have only repeated that part of it which is to my purpose, and GOD grant to bless us with the Success of it, and which he will certainly do, if we do not obstruct his Mercies, and so let down his new Jerusalem amongst us.

The Verses are these.

*And since Men wandering in a Wood by Night,
When they shall through a glade behold some light,
Take thereby Courage to walk chearly on,
In hope their Fears and Toyls are nearly gone.
I'll from a Cloud flash out a little gleam
Of Lightning, and disclose a little Beam,
Whereby on you a glimmering shall be cast
Of what you may attain to at the last.
For I will shew you by what Pedigree
That Government to you deriv'd shall be,
Which will at last the British Islands bless
With inward Peace, and outward Happiness.
It was of late a brief presage of his,
Who oft hath Truth fore-told, and it is this, &c.*

After all, I know no other Objection to be made
Objections in this matter, but that these things are rather figu-
Historical. rative than real; and that all Examples of this Na-
ture have been rather Dispensations of Providence
by way of singular Favour, than true and designed Objects for
our Imitation: But surely such an Objection as this has but little
weight in it, when duly considered, however popular and fair
it may appear in its self.

And I have the rather stated this Objection here, because I
know it to be the Epidemick and Reigning Error of the Age;
the common Vogue runs, Miracles are ceas'd, the Light of Pro-
phesy is extinguish'd; and so far they are right, as they mani-
festly are through the wickedness of the Age. But, say they
further,

further, this our Darkneſs, alas, is no other than what was deſigned us all along; all our Glorious Diſpenſations were but for a ſeaſon, and for the better and more ſure eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity: But ſurely in this they are our, or elſe neither the purport of Scriptures nor Hiſtory were to be regarded, which have both expreſſly delivered us the contrary.

Thus, do we conſult Scripture, what is more evident than that GOD all along diſtributed his Gifts without reſpect of Perſons, and that throughout all Ages; if we begin with *Adam* in *Paradiſe*, 'tis not many Generations e're we come to *Enoch*, and after that to *Noah*: And ſo if we paſs by the Ages of the Flood, how ſoon appears the Holy *Melchizedeck*, and the ſeries of Prophets in *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*.

After theſe, I may add, appears the great Luminary *Moſes*, who indeed almoſt made a Nation of Prophets after him; but think you he alone, and his Contemporaries had ſuch peculiar Favours for the ſake of his Revelation? No, a whole Series of Prophets reaches even from *Moſes* to Chriſt; and ſcarce a Century paſſed, but what ſome Pious Jew or other prov'd as a further aſſiſtant to the decaying Faith of the World. Indeed for ſome time before our Saviour's Birth an Universal Spiritual Darkneſs begun to over-ſpread the Earth, and as well the Prophets, as the *Urim* and *Tummim* began to diſappear; but ſurely the gloomy Night was fully answered by the Glorious dawning of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, Chriſt Jeſus.

Hitherto therefore I think we may well conclude, that either the Holy Scriptures are falſe, or that neither Miracles nor Prophecy ever really ceaſed, or were deſigned to do ſo: I will not ſay, but that it may ſeem from hence as if Mankind at times has been ſo blind and wicked, that we have had few of the more Illuſtrious Saints of GOD, and that the Infidelity of Mankind has ſeemed to drown us in Night, till the more Glorious Diſpenſations of GOD's Providence have opened our Eyes: But if ſuch be our caſe, and as it really ſeems to be no other, let us truly learn to Reaſon aright, and to vindicate the Juſtice of GOD, rather than our ſelves in ſuch our Infidelity.

But to paſs by all theſe more Illuſtrious tracks of the Grace of God in Holy Writ, and thoſe ſtupendious Wonders that were wrought by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, let us examine a little how after-ages followed: I muſt confeſs we cannot expect the ſame

Authority for what we write in this case, as what we could before in the Scriptures, because we have no such Evidences since for our Proof; but surely otherwise, if History may be believed; or if the Credit of best of Writers may be regarded, the Ages after Christ have no more wanted their Luminaries, than those after Moses.

Thus, shall we consult *Eusebius*, he tells you, not only that Holy *Poly carp*, *lib. 4. cap. 15.* was warned by Vision of his Martyrdom by Fire, dreaming the Night before that his Pillow was on fire under him, but that when he came to the Stake, a Voice was heard audibly from Heaven, to bid him be of good Courage, the better to support him under his Martyrdom. Or if you want other passages of the power of Faith in the Primitive Christians, read but his *lib. the 5th.* and *cap. the 5th.* and he acquaints you of the Lightning Legion, that even drew down Rain from GOD through their Prayers.

Nor is this all that *Eusebius* tells us of; does he not also acquaint us in his Life of *Constantine*, *Cap. 22, 23.* that a Cross appeared publicly in the Air to his Army, with this Inscription, *In hoc signo vinces?* Nay, and does not *Socrates Scholasticus*, *Lib. 1. Cap. 1.* acquaint us with the same? Besides that *Constantine* had his continual Divine Warnings by Dreams and Visions, to protect him from his Enemies.

But for once too I will grant, that these great and celebrated Wonders were done to usher in the first Christian Emperour *Constantine*, and to Congratulate Happy Christianity in the Throne; for this was done full Three Hundred Years after Christ, and therefore surely cannot justly be esteemed as in part of the Apostolick Age. I say therefore, suppose that such were the occasions of these Miracles, yet cannot the succeeding Ages parallel them.

Let us trace the Times therefore on a little; *Socrates Schol.* acquaints us, *lib. 2. cap. 24.* that such another Cross appeared to *Constantinus the Arrian*. *Lib. 1. Cap. 9.* That one was delivered by a Miracle from Prison: *Lib. 3. Cap. 16.* That whilst one *Theodorus* was suffering, an Angel stood by him, and relieved, and eased the pains of his stripes. *Lib. 7. Cap. 4.* That whilst a Jew was baptized, he was healed of his Palsie. And *Lib. 7. Cap. 17.* That whilst a counterfeited Jew was about to be baptized, the Water vanished.

But

But why should I stand thus as on the brinks of the Miracles related by *Socrates*? Does he not, *Lib. 6. Cap. 6.* acquaint us, how *Constantinople* was once Garrison'd by Angels against their Enemies? And *Lib. 7. Cap. 18.* how another time the desponding Citizens of the same City were acquainted even by Angels also of the Victory over their Enemies.

Nay, does he not in another place surprize us with a Wonder even greater than all these together? As *Lib. 3. Cap. 17.* How that when *Julian* would have set the *Jews* about building again their Temple, Miraculous Fires appeared, and destroyed all their Tools and Foundations; and Crosses like the Sun appeared on the Workmen's Cloaths, by no means for a long time to be removed, in terror to their Proceedings, and in utter disappointment of their Attempts.

Nor need I rest here; what cannot I as justly proceed to further Centuries for the several successive Wonders of Faith? Thus, does not *Evagrius Scholasticus, lib. 3. cap. 7.* acquaint us of the Miracles of *Zosimas* and *Cbusubites*? And so, *Cap. 14.* does he not acquaint us of Confessors, that had their very Tongues cut out, and yet continued still to speak, and that throughout the whole City of *Constantinople*? And so, does he not, *lib. 2. cap. 3.* acquaint us of Martyrs Tombs even Miraculously and Divinely perfum'd.

But above all, when we consider his Wonders related of Holy *Simeon*, and his several Miracles related, *Lib. 4. cap. 33, 34, 35.* and *lib. 6. cap. 23.* together with the Prodigies of his Apparition and Star that were seen about his Pillar after his Death, as he acquaints us, *lib. 1. cap. 1.* Surely we have no reason but to conclude, That GOD at all times hears those that diligently serve him; and that neither Time nor Persons are exempt from the Blessings of his Grace, unless they voluntarily incapacitate themselves from receiving them.

Nay, and besides these things, I could acquaint you of others not less considerable, even from other Testimonies: What shall we say to St. *Austin*, does not he acquaint us of at least Seventy Miracles done in his Times? Does he not assure us, that he was cured of the Tooth-ach through Prayer himself, and that two Blind Men received their sight only through the touch of the Bodies of two deceased Martyrs?

So what shall we say to the Visions of *Curma*, the Miracles he mentions done publickly in Churches through Prayer? I may

say, what can we make of the infinite other foot-steps of Faith, that the other Holy Fathers and Writers have left behind them? Can nothing of what they relate be esteemed for Truth? And must we still be of that brutish sense, that 'tis rather the Will of GOD than our own Defects that keeps us from following such Glorious Patterns before us?

To be short, Reader, I have given thee a Summary trace in this matter to the Sixth Century, and I hope to thy Satisfaction; I will not say, that in these latter Ages GOD has left himself entirely without a Witness; for undoubtedly I might justly continue thee an agreeable Series of the Mercies of GOD, at least in some lesser degrees, even to our days, witness the Delivery of *Melancthon*, and the Prayers for Rain of *Luther*. But since I have brought thee as far as the brink of Popery, and as long as our present Churches will allow the past Catholick, I shall content my self in desisting the further Labour.

Upon the whole, I know nothing left to be disputed in this case but the Credit of Histories; and as for that, I shall little concern my self: If the Dispute be, whether the Gifts of GOD were ever designed to cease, and undoubted History be not admitted upon it, I shall never trouble my self to Argue with a Man that runs counter to all the Methods of Reasoning.

But bless me! were the drift of my Argument turned, and were I to prove the frequent Manifestations of Evil Spirits, what a number of Instances could I summon? The Prophet tells us of old, that *Babylon* was given up to become an Habitation for Evil Spirits: And can we think what he wrote was Allegorical only, when the Experience of our own Ages has shewn us what Power the Devil has sometimes to infest even whole Cities and Countries?

Thus, what shall we say to the Story related by Dr. *More*, of the Ghost of *Contius*, and others, that alone have disturbed whole Cities, and driven almost Trade and Inhabitants from them? So, what shall we say to the Modern Relation of the *Swedeland* Witches, delivered us by Dr. *Horneck*, and attested as well by the King of *Swedeland* himself, as his Ambassadors, where Hundreds of People, and whole Parishes almost, have been Convict of Witchcraft at a time; where the Devil often appeared in bodily shape in the Day-time, and the Power he had was so great, that almost the whole Kingdom was in a Terror at it.

I alledge these things because done in our own Ages, and before Thousands of Witnesses together ; like the Apparitions related by *Josephus*, before the Destruction of *Jerusalem* : Nor are they so singular neither, as some Men may pretend. What, was not the Story of the Devil of *Mafcon* (attested by the Famous Mr. *Boyle*) notorious through the whole City ? Was not the Disturbance at *Woodstock* such, as not only lasted many days, but was to *Cromwel's* Commissioners (in whom the Supream Authority of the Nation was at that time.) And have not the Witchcrafts in *New-England* been such of latter Years, that the very Governour, and Deputy-Governour there have thought it worth their whiles to attett them ?

I know these things rather illustrate the Power of the Devil than the Kingdom of God ; but what of that, if these things are true, *contraria lustrant* ? And can we with any sense imagine that there are invisible Beings at every turn tempting Men to Evils, and yet their Vassals subject to our ordinary courses of Justice ; and not at the same time imagine that there are also holy invisible Powers, who not only Rule the Malice of the wicked Spirits, but are as ready with their Graces to embrace the approaches of the good, as the Devils of the evil, were it not that our Wickedness with-held us from such Blessings ?

But after all I know there are a sort of *Sadducees* amongst us, that neither these nor any other Arguments will be able to move : What is it to them, though that the Wisdom of all Nations have made Laws against Wizards, and daily Execute them ? What is it to them, though that *Luther* and *Melancton*, the first Reformers, have both attested such Pranks of the Devil from their own Experience, and that the best of our Histories brand many even of our Popes of being Conjurers and Wizards ? The whole notwithstanding is a Chymera to them, and we poor *Pharisaick* Christians, that believe such things as Apparitions, Spirits, and a future state, are a parcel of Credulous Fools with them, that deserve not their Argument. But for my part, I can't think but that had these Men a Courage and Justice to Act impartially accordingly, they might deny the Truth of Christianity, nay, and the very Existence of the Deity its self, with full as good a Reasoning.

Nor is the particular Ministry of Angels in these cases altogether to be discern'd for our Evil and Delusion only, as in Witchcrafts, but sometimes for our Good and Assistance also : I cannot

not say, but the Holy Ministers are generally more modest than the Apostate Spirits even when they do appear; besides that our Wickedness drives them from us, or else surely we want no less certainty for the Proof of our Guardian Angels, besides the general Instances before given, than our Evil Genius's, the Scriptures are plain in this matter beyond doubt, and give us variety of Examples about it, besides the particular words of Christ for it, That his little Ones have always their Angels in the presence of God on their behalf.

But alas! when one tells some Men of these things, or of the Angels that attended *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, ay, and *Moses*, and the rest of the Prophets, and Christ and his Apostles on occasions, they tell you Scripture-times were not like other times, that these were singular Favours only: But what, can there be any sense in such shuffling? Shall the Scriptures elsewhere tell us expressly how God has given his Angels charge over us, and that all these things are written for our Ensamble? And shall we then against all Ingenuity continue to imagine that the first three Millenaries of the World should be alone so singular in their Dispensations from the rest?

Besides, what is more plain than that even in these latter days also we are not without the like Examples of the best Credit, of the assistances of Angels: Thus, is it not recorded (as I have wrote) particularly of *Constantine*, how all the Plots of his Enemies were revealed to him by Dream and Vision? And does not History tell us, how *Melancton* and others have been often delivered from dangers through the notices of good Spirits? I may say, does not Judge *Hales* in his Contemplations assure us of the like Heavenly Notices to himself; and is there scarce either History or Book, that does not give us some or other like Instances about it?

I must confess 'tis but rare that we find that Familiarity from them, as is related of one ——— who is said to be called up in the Morning by one, and to have had notice either of Company, or Books, if he entertained such as the Angel was not pleased with. But the Genius of *Socrates*, of which he speaks particularly himself in his Dying Orations, is what seems more familiar, and may be in the Experience of several others, had they made but a due and just Observation.

He tells you, that at all times when he went about any thing that was evil or dangerous, he had certainly some private notice

of it, either by Dream, or otherwise; and in this respect, says he, I made it my constant Practice to obey my Monitor where I could: But, says he at present, though I hazard even my Life for the professing of Truth, I find no check from him for the danger; and therefore, says he, I conclude, that as he that has been my Faithful Guide for these Threescore Years, knows better what is good for me than my self; he approves of my hazarding my self for these greater Truths of God: And in this respect I can say my self also, that scarce a considerable Action has ever happened in my Life, that I have not had by Dreams an apparent Prediction of it before hand, and sometimes not without Advice.

And here I cannot forbear the Recording of one more Extraordinary Providence that happened to an Acquaintance of mine, *viz.* That once being to take a Journey, in which he had an Election of two ways to go; in the Morning just before he arose, there appeared to him a Glorious Head, with an Hand pointing by it; it was several Years since, but if ever he was awake in his Life, he says it was when he saw this Apparition. I must confess, at first it had so considerable an impression upon him, that he thought to wait on some Divines his Acquaintance near him for their Advice about it; but afterwards recollecting with himself, that he had a Dispute which Road to go, and that Suspicious Persons had advised him to the Privater Road, he construed the Divine Monition himself, as that it related to his Journey, and accordingly went that way he conceived pointed at; but what Deliverance he had by it God only knows, this he remembers, by observing it, he got very safely home to his Journey's end.

And now since I have gone thus far, and as clearly and briefly as I have been able, led you through the state of Prophecy to Translation, and confirmed what I have said, at least I think sufficiently by Examples; I think it may be high time, after some little matter added concerning *Of Heaven.* Heaven it self; and some Directions for your Preparation towards this Kingdom, to draw towards a Conclusion: And in this case though the Rays and Joys of Heaven are too bright for Humane Understanding, yet there may be some Glympe of it, that even our Natural Light may give us; so that though we cannot gaze far into the Blessed state, surely that may not discourage us, but that we may trace it as far as it will lead us.

When

When we remove to the Blessed Mansions above therefore, we must needs think withal that we shall change these our Earthly and Corrupt Tabernacles, our Bodies there will be more Glorious and void of Corruption; and our Sensations and Perceptions not only new and different, but wonderfully more lively and vigorous than now, nay, and of an Eternal Duration; our Spirits there will never flag with Satiety and repetition of Fruition, nor ever be moved with Curiosity of change, but move on in a continued and wise Constancy in long and endless Enjoyments.

GOD himself at first, and as by a new Creation will then wipe away all Tears with their causes, and instead of them will Present us with an Unchangeable and Eternal Consort of Joy, with Songs of his Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy; we shall Pray without ceasing, and Praise without tiring, and stand eternally enflamed and ravished with admiring the Glories, Beauties, yea, and Wonders of the Power, Justice, and Mercy of GOD.

There no racking Curiosity for Wisdom will torment us, we shall know, at least as much as we shall see we ought to know: There no Tenderness for our Friends in this World will disturb us, our Earthly Relations will vanish, we shall put them off with our Bodies; and they only will be regarded there by us as our Father and Brother, our Sister and Mother, who have truly obeyed the Commands of our GOD, our only real Father.

And to compleat all, GOD himself will place his Throne amongst us, and though in reality he be every where, yet for our Comfort, he will make his most Glorious appearance amongst us, whilst Rings of Angels, and Principalities in Perfection, of Order and Address, glorifie their great and wonderful Maker, even dazling them with his Glory from his Throne in the midst of them. But O! what are the Miseries that the Damned are to feel instead of this, for their Disobedience and Wickedness?

And what then, are these things thus? Nay, is there a GOD?

And is not our Sabbath our one day in seven, that
Of Preparing we bestow on Religion, flung away in vain a-
our selves. mongst us? Or is Religion really a serious Duty?

If it is, let us learn to regard these things that are so evidently true, and that so nearly concern us in earnest; and not like mean and base Hypocrites seem to regard them, when we really esteem them to be but as a Jest or Trifle. Let us therefore in earnest begin to Purifie our selves, and prepare us for so great a Kingdom.

Let

Let us walk always as in the sight of GOD; let us avoid even all appearance of Evil, nay, and let us take care to work out our Salvations with Fear and Trembling, and not fall through a Presumption of our own Strength, but rather trust wholly on GOD. And lastly, we must add to all this Sincerity; Sincerity is the only great and solid Foundation to build on, and remember withal that we must actually endeavour through GOD's Grace to render our selves pure, and not barely expect GOD's Assistance, for that he never bestows upon the sluggish.

Nor are or can be the Pangs of this New Birth, or Regeneration easie to a Worldly Mind; for as it must be entire, so we ought to be always ready, and that even precisely, lest the Bridegroom should knock and surprize us at unawares: And hence also, even to keep all the Commandments from our Youth up is not enough, if we refuse to sell all, where the Glory of GOD requires it, *Luke 9. 62.* we fall back from the Crisis that GOD is leading us to.

And so also, as I have observed before, the self-denial, even of a common Martyrdom, is not enough; for the lowest degree of these Glories here is required an entire resignation, and without we are even born again, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD, *John 3. 3.* And as many mens Lusts are dearer unto them than their Lives, so Life alone is not Sacrifice enough to perfect a compleat new Birth.

Thus *Abraham* in Faith was forced to leave his Father's Country ere he had the Promise of another; and thus we see also, that we, with Christ, must learn to be able to despise this World, if ever we design for a better; and yet not, I say, neither that thou shouldst tempt GOD in Health or Food, or sell all to give to the Poor, till thou art called thereto.

Further, if thou seekest this Kingdom in Curiosity, and not in Duty, and as a Servant of all, know GOD will never encourage thee in thy Lusts; and whereas if thou Address him with an humble, constant, and diligent Application, thou wilt even wonder to see how GOD will purifie thee by degrees to Perfection.

Take care therefore that thou be not like the Seed sown in stony Ground, that will sprout up fast at first, but dye away in Affliction, for want of Root and Consideration: So remember also, that Moderation is to be thy Fountain-Vertue, indeed the very Basis supporting all. And withal take care that thou get Wis-

dom also, that thou mayest be the perfecter for the Service of GOD; if there be not Light in the Understanding, there cannot well be Heat in the Affections. And lastly, to all these thou must add Patience; for as GOD hazards not our Tryals at a push, so we must expect to be made Perfect by Constancy, Patience, and Long-suffering.

Or if you had rather, I shall prescribe your Preparation in the Apostle's own words thus, *1 Thess. 5. 16, 17. Rejoyce evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of GOD in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit, despise not Prophecies, prove all things, hold fast that which is good, abstain from all appearance of evil.* In truth, does not Christ reckon the Evil to his little Ones as to himself? *Matth. 25. 40.*

So in *St. James's Epistles, Cap. 4. Ver. 6, 7, 8.* God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit your selves therefore to GOD, resist the Devil, and he will flee from you; draw nigh to GOD, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purifie your hearts, you double-minded.

So also *Phil. 4. 8.* says the Apostle, Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any vertue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

So in *2 Cor. 12. 9.* St. Paul, to encourage us, tells us from his Example, that we should glory in our Infirmities, as GOD's Grace is sufficient for us. So in *Cap. 4. ver. 7, 8.* of the same Epistle, he tells us, that though we are troubled, we ought not to despair, that the Glory of GOD might shine the brighter in us as Earthen Vessels; nor need we fear, for we have a most Solemn Promise, that we shall not be tempted beyond our strength.

Let us search our selves therefore; like *Achan*, we all harbour the accursed thing, and that it is that keeps us from the Kingdom of GOD: Indeed were we entirely wicked, his Justice would not let us subsist; and as we are luke-warm, if in time we do not mend, we must expect him to spew us out.

How long therefore shall we follow our dead Infidelity, and by our false Casuism and Controversies keep out the Kingdom of GOD from amongst us? Did we, like the Noble *Bereans*, search the Scriptures thoroughly, and not like little foolish Sects,
take

take our Faith on trust, and spend our time on Quarrels at Discipline, that ought to be employed in purifying our Lives and Practices. Did we hearken when GOD teaches us in our Consciences, and step into the Spiritual *Bethesda*, when the Spirit of GOD moves in our Meditations, 'twere impossible but that GOD should lead us right.

So, did we consider also that our Sins and Impurities are as much in our Hearts and Eyes, as our Hands and Actions, we should be more cautious of our Adulteries against the Law of GOD; but alas! we walk in blindness, and will not see; we waste our Zeal in Controversie, that should be spent in true Piety; we cast Mists of Tradition and Church-Authority before us in distraction of our Brotherly Love; so that if we would, we can't see: In truth, were our Eye single, we might hope for it; but alas, 'tis double, and our Lusts will not let us remove the Beam, and pluck out our right Eyes that offend us; we are too far enamoured with the Silver and Gold of the Whore, and the Lusts and Pride of Life, to be Disciples of so great Resignation.

And what but this 'is it that forces God to afflict us to see? And what but this is it that makes us reform, and reform again? Because our Corruptions sling us into our unaccountable Divisions, and will not let us see the guilt of them. Alas! how can we, as St. *John* tells us, pretend to love our Heavenly Father, that we have not seen, when our Discords are so unreasonable with our Brethren that we have seen? Surely if we ever intend to approach to God, we must learn to lay a deeper Foundation in our mutual Love and Charity towards it.

Further, in seeking this Kingdom also we must learn to avoid Idleness as bane, and seek heartily for Wisdom: Spare not therefore to rise early, and to be up late for it. Nor must you admit the least prejudice in your Wisdom, wilful Error and Piety can never subsist together; and yet remember withal, that 'tis not your large Bodies of Divinity so much, as 'tis GOD must lead you, not I mean, that you should tempt GOD neither for that Knowledge which Industry ought to attain; but that you ought to Pray and Meditate as well as Study, and hearken as well to the sincere checks of thy Conscience as Notions of Books, nor slight this Advice; for know GOD thus first illuminates those Souls that he intends to inhabit.

And yet let not this diligent Sincerity run thee into Care neither, but trust wholly on GOD without Anxiety after thy best

Endeavours, and yet be still on thy Guard, and ever aiming at the highest pitch of Sincerity and Purity ; indeed forfeit not thine Integrity though but even in a Trifle, for how dost thou know, O Man, but that that may be thy fatal Tryal ?

And to crown all this, add the Charity of a courageable Advice to Mankind ; fear not the face of Man, but rebuke him throughly, and rescue the Honour of GOD from his Errors ; and yet not that I would have thee disturb Men by thy Advice, or cast Pearls before Swine, or go about to Preach, as Christ did, till sent ; but I would have thee to seek all Prudent Occasions to Advise thy Brother, to rescue the Honour of GOD, advance his Kingdom, and save the Soul of thy Brother if it offers.

And if thou dost thus, thou needest not fear thy Success ; for if Christ could tell the Scribe for his discreet Answer, *Luke 12. 34. that he was not far from the Kingdom of GOD*, thou, if thou hazardest thus all for his Glory, needest not doubt it surely ; but else if thou forsake not all, thou canst not be his Disciple, *Luke 14. 33. As our Saviour says, The Children of this World are wiser than the Children of Light, Luke 16. 8. Or else they could never be mistaken so much in their Methods to Salvation as they are.*

'Tis true, GOD requires a Self-denyal in this beyond a little passionate spurt, I mean a real and continual one ; but what then, dare we not trust him ? And has he not assured us of Protection, and that we shall not lose by it, even in this World, and that though we fail in the Attempt ? And what remains then, but that we believe either that he can't help us, or is not Faithful ? Now, to say, he can't help us, is manifestly a Lye, for even the Coelestial Orbs, bigger than the Earth, move at this instant by his Providence ; much more then can he move a little Mountain, or do any less Act to save us. And wilt thou charge him with being unfaithful ? Pray tell me then whom it is that he has deceived ; if thou canst not, dost not thou calumniate him ?

What then remains, but that you think 'tis not possible for a Man to purifie himself to that degree that I prescribe ? But as to that, I say, 'tis false, he may ; no Man, I believe, can purifie himself from Frailties, for they are Humane ; but from wilful Guils of all kinds they may, or else GOD is unjust to require it, and which I am sure he is not ; if so, therefore provided we
are

are wary against all wilful Omissions or Commissions, we need not fear the injury of Frailties.

St. James tells us, *Cap. 5. Ver. 17, 18.* That *Elias* was a man subject to like Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the Earth for the space of three Years and six Months: And he prayed again, and the Heavens gave rain, and the Earth brought forth her fruit. And indeed it was the same *Elias* that was afterwards translated.

If this Power were given to *Elias* therefore, who had not the advantages of Christianity to help him, where lyes any just grounds for our doubt of it? You will say, sometimes in doubts you are forced to dissatisfie your Conscience where you know not how to resolve it: But as to that, as I have before directed thee, when with thy sincerest Judgment thou hast chosen the good, resolve and sink not into scruple, but rather rejoyce in thy Resolution, and that thou art sure that if after thine hearty Industry thou erreſt, that even GOD himself will reveal it to thee, rather than thine Error should injure thee, *Phil. 3. 15.* or else indeed, as the Apostle hath said, 'tis damnable.

To be short, therefore learn to be even obstinately constant in thy Devotions, and remember to do all things for the Glory and Honour of GOD; even to eat, drink, and be merry, without Faith, is Sin: For who gives us these Blessings? Is not that worth our care? Much more therefore when we seek our own Glory GOD may justly Sacrifice us in our best Actions. So never act in doubt, to stifle Doubts, is to quench GOD's Spirit; and no Man can ever be said to walk with GOD, as *Enoch* was said to do, to be translated, and yet resist him.

But for the better purifying your self, I shall now explain a little the Nature of the Grace of GOD, to shew you how it leads you, and how you ought to follow it. *Of Grace.*

Know then, that whatever may seem to us, to GOD there is no Accident, but he tries us in all things; thus, there is not an Example or Meditation that he will not make us Answer for as Talents; nay, whatever our Conscience recommends to us, whether by Reading, Hearing, or Recollection, 'tis all one; he will charge it all to Account against us, as well as the Grace that he imparts to us by a more immediate Revelation.

Nay, and even in Revelations, think you that *Socrates* was not a Prophet as well as *Micha*? If his Order and Dispensation was

was not so Glorious, yet his Divine Assistance was as just in its degree. And this we may assuredly learn further, that he that with *Socrates* will not cherish the beginnings of Grace, and take it in every Opportunity that it offers it self, shall never be able to improve himself in it, or to grow in it to the perfection of Christianity.

How wonderful, may I say therefore, are GOD's Methods in bringing his Sons to Glory? I might add, did not our Darling Lusts ungratefully blind us, we should be even ravished with GOD's Wisdom; but our Eyes are gross, and we have no Faith to see those ordinary Graces of GOD; indeed the more extraordinary ones of Visions, Miracles, and Tongues, we admire, but will not hazard an extraordinary Tryal to attain them.

But to proceed, 'tis the same Grace that gave us our Philosophy of old, and our Divinity of late, as I have said; the Dispensation now indeed is more glorious, but the Spirit is the same, nor indeed in this his more glorious Dispensation are his Gifts always the same; 'tis plain from 1 Cor. 12. that the Apostles had not all the same Powers; one had Prophecy, another had Tongues, and a third Miracles; and no one was compleat in Grace but Christ Jesus only: And yet even in this Imperfection the variety became a Beauty in the Church, and the several different Members yet made a Body uniform and compleat.

But as for the meaner Dispensations of Grace, they are infinite; thus the gentle, GOD moves through Advice, the Obstinate, through Afflictions; some, like *Job*, he purifies by Miseries, others, like *Pharaoh*, he hardens by his Rod; and thus sometimes he punishes the Wicked for Example, sometimes he suffers the Righteous to have his Judgments for a blind, sometimes he raises the Wicked as a Scourge to the Luke-warm, and sometimes he flatters them in their Prosperity, so sometimes he takes away the Righteous in Curse to the Wicked; and all this doth one and the same Spirit, actuated by a variety suitable to the Wisdom of GOD, and only to be discerned by an Eye of Purity and Faith.

Now our Reflections in this matter are these: First, That though GOD thus gradually hastens our Tryal, yet withal he has promised us, *That all things shall work together for the best for them that fear him*, Rom. 8. 28. Our use of them is, that we learn and follow our Duty to GOD by his first and gentle means of Grace, not only that his Grace may the more freely
work

work on us, but that we may avoid his Rod to force us; and as it is easier to kill a Lion's Whelp than a Lion, and to root up a young Oak than an old one; so in sins also, the first act is easily hindred, but we may bear the lash of many an heavy Affliction e're we are cured of an Habit.

But besides GOD's Grace, and our own Endeavours, we must add Prayers likewise, if ever we intend for a real Purity and the Kingdom of GOD; not, I Of Prayer. mean, that we should think proudly through Importunity to Storm GOD's Throne by it neither; but we ought with an humble Application to Pray without ceasing, and as the Scriptures tell us, that the Kingdom of GOD comes not with Observation, and we cannot know its time though we are assured it will come; so not only in Prayers, but Purity we ought not to be backwards whenever the Heavenly Spirit shall see good to visit us.

Remember thy Victory is through Prayer, and not through Study only; not that we should neglect the Study of Wisdom neither, and besides that Prayer through Importunity will make a real change in our Lives; for as we know, to Pray in our sins, or for a thing unlawful, is vain; so by our constant Prayer we shall do a double Duty, and force our selves into Purity, as well as obtain the Blessings we desire.

Besides, the Kingdom of Heaven is as Journey of a Thousand steps in Faith, and therefore we must allow so many Prayers at least to our Importunity; for believe me, if you faint at the first Tenth or Hundredth asking, you will never attain it; so that though thy Prayers obtain not immediately, neither faint, nor expostulate arrogantly with GOD, but humbly know thy fault, and pray his Mercy, and his Will be done; nor despair ever, for Faith has good grounds, and has overcome; study therefore to purifie thy self for ever on, and then by thy Importunity thou must prevail, and GOD will cleanse thee for thy Constancy and Sincerity's sake; for though no Man can merit before him, yet he has promised to Reward every Man according to his Works.

Remember also that GOD hates Passion, the Sacrifice of Fools; and as he has given thee good grounds for Faith, so thou must allow for Importunity, for even Christ was forced to prevail with him with Tears, and Moses to hold up his Hands all day, if he would that the *Israelites* should prevail: And besides,

if:

if thou art not answered in thy Prayers, may be thou wilt see some Reason and Corruption, if thou waitest with Patience, why thou art not; and if not, thou seest that thou hast this new Lesson to learn, that thou art to Conquer through long and humble begging, and not as if you intended to Command GOD. Was not even Christ himself forced to wait, like *Jonas* in the Whale's Belly, till his time was come?

In this therefore Pray to GOD himself to direct you, as *Moses*, *Samuel*, and the rest of the Prophets have done before you: GOD will not be rob'd of his Glory, and therefore if thou wilt not act purely in resignation to his Grace, thou mayst be lost a thousand times ere thou arrive at Glory; are you sure you Pray right, when you do not add withal, *Thy Will be done*? Pray rather therefore that thou mayst be cursed in this World, to be happy in the next, and seek wholly for the Glory of GOD, and to be resigned to his Will; nor be impatient, remember *Moses* was forced to wait after that he had fled for designing to be a deliverer.

But for Example, I have added hereunto a Form of Prayer to be used by those that shall see convenient.

Dear Father,

THough through the dint of Passion and fiery Zeal I cannot prevail with thee to enter thy Kingdom, yet I do not doubt but that I shall be able to do it through Constancy and Importunity, unless I am wanting to my self, for so thou hast promised me through my Saviour; pardon me therefore, if (with the most entire submission to thy Will) I continually wrestle with thee in Prayer; O GOD, I would not presumptuously offer at thy Kingdom thus by force, were it not that thou hast given me encouragement; but now thou hast, I beg thee, for thine own Glory, for thy Mercy's sake, and for the good of thy Creation, that thou wouldest not leave thy poor Churches destitute, but confound the works of Satan, and teach us the way to thy Kingdom; and even now, O Lord, I approach thee in all Humility, and after all my Petitions, thy Will only be done. Nothing that is presumptuous, wicked, or proud, can find acceptance in thy sight; and therefore I dare not move a step beyond what thy Precepts give me Authority; grant me therefore that as I pursue thine own Sacred Dictates and Commands, so I may prevail with thee, and not let thee go, until, like *Jacob*, I have got a Blessing from thee; I mean, not a Temporal one, but the Eternal one of thy Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Or

Or if this offend you, or seem imperfect, use that great and general Catholicon prescribed by our Saviour himself, and which indeed is so general, that it suits with all Men, of all Religions and Professions whatever, and is withal so perfect, that I might add, the Wit of Man is not able to exceed it.

Our (a) Father, which art in (b) Heaven. Hallowed be thy Name. Thy (c) Kingdom (d) come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in (e) Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, (f) and forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. (g) And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil, (h) for Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, (i) and the Glory, for ever, and ever. Amen.

(a) When we Pray, we ought to do it for others as well as our selves. (b) Our Addresses to God are to the chief, Seat of his Divine Majesty. (c) Note, the three first Petitions in this Prayer, are for the Honour of GOD, and which we ought to learn to seek before all things. (d) That is, to the destruction of Satans, (e) surely then possible (f) all outward Necessaries. (g) GOD will Judge us as we do others; let us beware therefore what we do in this case, lest we Pray in vain. (h) These last Petitions are for our selves purely, and therefore most deservedly follow the other. (i) This Doxology is as well to stir up our Faith at last, as to Praise GOD.

To this I shall also add four Rules whereby the Scriptures tell us that we shall be accepted in our Prayers. * The First, when we Pray for one another; thus St. Peter was delivered out of Prison by an Angel. Secondly, Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's Name to encourage Publick Communion. Thirdly, Pray without ceasing, remembering neither to ask amiss, nor in your Lusts, James 4. 3. 1 Thess. 5. 17. Fourthly, To Pray every day afresh, and as GOD's Spirit shall by your Conscience lead you, remembering that GOD is to be worshipped in Spirit and Truth.

Now, though the state and corruption of the Church may Excuse us in our Duty in the Second of these, to wit, as to matter of Communion; yet as to the other three, nothing can

* The Author for the same Reason desires all his Readers particular Prayers for him, either if he is in the Truth, to strengthen and continue him in it, or if he is in an Error, to let him be taught, and given to understand better, even so I beseech thee, O Lord, for Christ's sake. Amen.

excuse us, and if possible nothing ought to excuse us even from the Second also; indeed if we either wilfully or negligently disregard these Rules, we need not wonder if our Prayers never prevail.

* Note, By Old Tradition the World as it has lasted 2000 Years before the Law, and 2000 Years after it, so also is it to last 2000 Years after the Coming of Christ, ere we arrive at the great and final *Millenium*, or Sabbath. But a surer Rule is, that GOD hath put the Times and Seasons of all things in his own Power, *Acts* 1. 7.

I have hereunto added also a Copy of an Extraordinary Dream that I had some Years since, which I recollected I had a Copy of by me some time after I wrote this Treatise, and which seeming to tend so directly to the same purpose, I thought I could not well at the same time deny the Reader a sight of it together herewith. What is the true meaning and purport of it, God, who only knows, will shew in his own time; in the mean while I have delivered it down very near in very same rude form of Expression that I wrote it several Years since.

Memorandum, That about the latter end of May, in the Year 1681. just upon my Recovery from the Small-Pox, I had the Strange and Remarkable Dream following; and which seeming as Notable in its intent and coherence, as it was lively in my reception of it, about two Years after, and whilst every Circumstance of it remained clear in my Memory, I wrote it down (some little Additions by present Memory excepted) as ensueth.

I imagined my self Travelling, I thought, to *France*, and it seemed as it were by a Chariot, or Engine of Ropes, and by which I seemed first to be raised up to a very great height, and afterwards to be slid down again forwards with it, as with a very great swiftness.

Methoughts my Journey was by Moon-shine, and whilst I was thus raised in the Air, I imagined I more perfectly survey'd the Heavens than now, and they appeared to me but as a decayed wooden Engine, however of a vastly large Architecture, and the Moon shining brightly in them. Methoughts also I saw the rest of the World almost all mudling below, except some few,

few, and who seemed in the like little Chariots beneath me.

At length as I travelled on, I apprehended I had a pretty little Book given me, what it was, I cannot declare, but this I remember, I perused it with a very great Satisfaction, and continued it in my hand for some time, till by and by I was diverted by the presence of a Guardian Angel; I apprehended he fate on my Chariot by me on my Right Hand as it were behind me: At first indeed he shewed himself but dimly to my sight, but even his Presence so seemed to inspire me with an extraordinary Devotion.

But at last methoughts he became familiar and visible, even as a Friend to me; and then talking with him of several matters, I remember I asked him, though 'twas with indifference, whether 'twere God's Will I should ever attain considerable Riches? Upon this he puts his Hand (as if a Man) into his Pocket, and seeming to pull out parings of Gold, thence he puts them into his Hat, where they jingling like Gold on his handling them, I imagined by an extraordinary Power he immediately also melted them with his Hand, and framed them into Coin and Medals, and then begun to tell me, how 'twas God's Will, that I should not have it all my self, but that a part of it must go for Charitable Uses.

And now when it seemed all coined, and I expected immediately to receive it, straight the Devil appears, and would needs have taken it from him; he could not indeed, but I imagined I could never receive it upon it, however seeing this Attempt in vain, he designs a second, and turning about upon me, thought to assault me to prejudice me too, but that the Angel defended me; but now, what with Devotion, and the sense of my Angel's aid together, methoughts I begun to increase my Courage.

However he assaults me again in the shape of a tall Woman, and I thought he would have prejudiced me too, but that now I imagined my self grown much stronger, and yet still the Angel was forced to help me, and drive her away; but this I particularly remember, that in his shape as a Man before, he did not seem half so furious as now, and when in the shape of a Woman.

So I could observe this further too, that I did not rise so high now, nor fall so low as I did before; indeed my Journey in my Chariot now seemed very near the Earth, and for the most part

keeping a continual distance from it, whereas at the beginning sometimes I shot as almost from the Clouds up and down.

But now a further Misfortune befalls me, and my Angel tells me, he must leave me; he tells me, he must go and assist the afflicted, and who, as he said, were spoiled by Robbers. I must confess I could not but be troubled at the hearing of the loss that I was like to have, but withal methoughts I willingly and devoutly parted with my Company, when I saw 'twas on so good an Occasion.

And now methinks he forsakes me, and all my Entertainment is the noise of dismal and terrible groans as I imagined coming from Men that seemed robbed and wounded; however this hindred not but that I continued on in my Chariot, and methoughts now instead of my Angel, I seemed to have three or four of my Earthly Friends about me, though I cannot remember in particular who they were.

But methoughts their Company at this Juncture was of very great satisfaction to me, for I loved them entirely, and so that now I seemed near as happy as ever: However for all this we are not even yet free from our Old Enemy the Devil, who now taking the advantage of the Angel's absence, endeavours to assault us afresh.

But now methoughts my Strength and Courage is increased much beyond what it was, and I vanquished him alone, and defended my Company from him too, and who seemed to trust to me, and whom he assaulted as my Friends; so that now seeing he could do me no hurt by force, he falls to reproaches and hissing; his reproach, I remember, was, *You Jew, You Jew*, which he repeated twice or thrice, and then went away hissing.

But this was so far from dismaying me, that it rather cheered and encouraged me; and now whilst I am full of Devotion and Thanksgiving for my Deliverance, methinks in the midst of it, to mine inexpressible Joy, a Dove in Glory, as I conceived the Holy Ghost, descended on me; and now I am almost swallowed up in Joy, and ravished with Ecstasies and Raptures; nay, and more, after this I am no more troubled by my Enemy the Devil; but as he assaulted me this last time, and as indeed he did at every other time, at the left side of my Chariot, so now going under the Chariot from me to the right, I heard him howl grievously (seeming as at near a Furlong off) on his Departure, to cry, *O my Heel! O my Heel!*

But

But now my Devotion seems to move me another way, and now I resolve to go and do the same good Work that my Angel was gone about before me, methinks accordingly I leave my Friends, and leave my Chariot, and jump immediately on the Earth, and where I imagine I go forth with Vigour : The place I enter seems a Wood or Wilderness, and where I heard most lamentable Cries ; but at last coming to the Robbers, though I fight heartily and bravely with them, yet methinks they are too hard for me, and I am shot Arms and Legs to the stumps, and imprisoned by them.

However all this doth not happen to me neither without the Comfort of abundance of good Friends, for now I imagine I have hundreds about me, and all endeavouring to cheer me in my Misfortune, but alas, all to no purpose ; for now methinks by a secret Voice by God I am struck into a deep despair for some Presumption I have committed, and now I am all in Prison and Tears, I can neither sleep nor rest, continually Repenting, and yet comfortless, till at last another Voice, as from God, assures me of Forgiveness, and now I can enjoy my Friends again.

Nay, and in a little time I am restored to my Limbs, and freed from Prison again, and now I enter a second Chariot, and here my Chariot was as before, only that it seemed to carry me even, and without either rises or falls as the other did ; nor had I in this Chariot the least Company, either of Man or Spirit in view by the way, but methoughts I continued on quietly by my self, till at last methoughts my Journey ended, by my Chariot's stopping of its self, and shooting its self against the Earth, just as a Ship does against the shore.

Here therefore I am forced to alight, but I am no sooner got up, but straight I find a two-edged or bladed Sword in my hand ; here also methoughts I immediately met a true Friend, that being truly faithful and cordial to me, methinks we fight the Robbers again, or some other Enemy, and here methinks my Sword does extraordinary Execution, and I fight till I dissolve, as if I vanished both Body and Sword into Spirit.

A N
APPENDIX
 O F
Two Discourses :

T H E

I. *Of PERSECUTION, declaring the
 Law of Nations in Matters of Religion.*

T H E

II. *Of CATHOLICK COMMUNION,
 or the Neglected Duty of Unity in Pub-
 lick Worship.*

The Law of Nations in Religion.

IN Religion, both they that plead for Persecution, and they that are for an Absolute Toleration, are equally in Extreams; the mean therefore must be evident, to wit, a modest Establishment between both; and which that I may the better set forth, I shall first take care briefly to refute all colour for Persecution. Secondly, As clearly as I can I shall shew the
 Mischiefs

Mischiefs of an Absolute Toleration. And lastly, I hope as evidently to describe the more Excellent Mean in a moderate Establishment. I begin with the first.

First, It is not my Design, whilst I write against Persecution, thereby to make any Apology for Religious Villanies; no, an Error in Religion ought to be scratch'd by our Pens, but an immoral Member, no doubt, like a Gangreen, ought to be cut off; *Es ne pars sincera trahatur*, let no Man therefore here unjustly charge me, that whilst I make Apology for the Conscience agreeable to the Peace of States, I withal seem to Plead for such Religious Villanies, as are not fit to be suffered.

But for a Peaceable Profession of Religion, be it what it will, I would fain ask this Question, Why should Men be persecuted from it? If you force them by Argument from their Belief, well and good; but if by Power and Might only, either you make them Libertines, if you leave them to use no Religion, or damn them for Hypocrites, if you force them to a Falsh against their Consciences.

But no, you'll force Men to believe by it, you say; bless me, that Men can be so absurd! as if Sense were to be confounded by Power, or Truth to be altered by Might. What shall I say? To force Men to believe against their Conviction of Truth, is impossible; force them to lye and dissemble indeed we may, if there be any Merit in that; and who can doubt but that when Mens Consciences are tumbled from Pillar to Post at every Revolution of State, as is too often done, but that such is the effect of it?

But no, says the *Romanist*, you mistake, our Religion continues one, and changes not; ay, and by that means they take as excellent a course to make their growing Errors as eternal as their Reformation impossible; and yet can even all that hinder, but that a Protestant State prevailing on them, may use them full as scurvily as they use others; and why not justly too, since but with the same false Presumption that they measured to others before?

But bless me! be it so or not, is not this very agreeable in the mean while to the true Christian Genius? Surely this is an admirable way of helping weaker Brethren, as that prescribes to ensnare them thus to their Ruines; nay, and what? when we perversely and wickedly thus force Men to come to our Church, though against their Consciences, can we pretend that we act
any

any thing like what was designed in the Gospel, which purposefully orders all such Profane Persons to be avoided.

Besides, what do we do in this, but take the surest way to make the good and sincere Men of all sides only suffer, and indeed who alone ought to be spared? Alas! our Atheists and Hypocrites they know well enough how to dance after the Pipes of the Times, be your Tests and Enforcements what they will: But I'll maintain, let a State but change her established Religion for twice or thrice together, and give each Party on the change a power of Persecution, they shall more effectually root out all their Honest Men, than by all the cunningest Policies in the World besides.

2. Secondly, As for an Absolute Toleration, 'tis such a senseless and insipid Project of Imagination, that never any considerate Body of Men since the Creation entertained it; when Men can love all Religions alike, or, which is all one, hate them all, such a Chymera may pass Muster with them: Or else to imagine that Men can encourage the true and false Religions alike, has as much sense in it as they have Zeal for the Faith, that can do it.

Thus even the Primitive Christians that could complain very much of the Pagans Persecuting them in *Tertullian's* time, yet even they themselves, under *Valentinian* and *Theodosius*, would not suffer the Heathens to Sacrifice to their Goddess Fortune. And thus those very Protestants in Queen *Mary's* days, that could complain so justly of Martyrdom, and Fire and Faggot, yet could not forbear afterwards some Pecuniary Mulcts on Dissenters themselves.

So also those Dissenters that in the Reigns of Queen *Elizabeth*, King *James* the First, and King *Charles* the First, could complain so furiously of the High-Commission Court, yet when by the War in 1640. they could get the Church of *England* under, straight they could treat her much worse; and yet when they fell under the Lash again in 1660. though they were treated little worse than they deserved, and met with less Severity than they formerly exercised, yet could they complain as furiously as before. And pray, since the late Revolution, when the Presbyterians in *Scotland* got the Episcopals under, have they not treated them with Rigour enough?

To be short, to tell them that are able to suppress the opposite Party, that they ought to be contented with an equal Toleration,

is Nonsense, and will never be regarded, at least it never was yet. And so to tell them that are in Possession, that they ought to bear with a rising Sect or Opinion, though it may hereafter endanger them, is of the same Nature. I may say, offer this Argument to the Pagan, Jew, Mahumetan, to the Catholick, Arrian, Presbyterian, or Independant, where they are established, and see if they will admit it.

In plain terms, there is no Party that is sincere in their Profession, but what will endeavour to propagate it by all fair ways, and 'tis well if some won't endeavour by fair and foul too to get their Religion to have the Preheminence. 'Tis plain therefore that as Heart-burnings, Jealousies, and Animosities, ay, and at last, open Seditions and Rebellions, must needs grow from such a Rivalry state of Religion, and as is proved by every day's Experience, so the State of Necessity, and for Peace sake also, will be bound to set up but one, and that the chief Religion in their Judgments only, and to depress and discourage the rest by moderate Penalties; and which brings me to the third and last thing proposed, to wit, an Enquiry into that Golden Mean of a rightfully established Church, between a Bloody Persecution, and a Lawless and Libertine Toleration.

Thirdly, and lastly, Our business that remains therefore is to examine fully and freely into the true and real bounds of an Established or National Church; and which that I may the better do, I shall first trace Persecution from her Fountain by the hand, and after that conducting her to that moderate pitch which such an established Church shall require; leave her there as to a Standard of Truth for all the Churches and States in the World to follow. *Iustum est quod æqui mihi & tibi convenit.*

But to begin, Who is it we shall Arraign for Persecution?

First, Charge the State, she'll tell you, that 'tis the Church that sets her on, and enforces it as necessary with her.

Secondly, Charge the Church, says even Rome her self, we do but Excommunicate Men, and if the State afterwards, who finds Hereticks and Schismatics as bad as Traytors, punishes them accordingly, can we help it?

Very well, the case is plain then, the Priest will never be a Butcher himself, so long as he can get the Magistrate to do his Drudgery; pray God, on the other side, the Magistrate learn so much Wit, as not to be Butcher and Villain too, to serve him.

Besides, in this we have gained another point too, in seeing how plainly the Churches have all renounced Persecution; therefore thus far, I may say, we are clear the Power is in the State, or no where; therefore there we will fix, and there alone we will endeavour to bound it.

To begin therefore, to say, that the State has no Right to meddle in Religion, is as false as to say, that they may Persecute illimitably, 'if Peace be the care of the State, and Religion supported or abused, tends to the advance or detriment of the Peace, 'tis plain Religion's as great an Object of the State's care as any thing.

Besides this, I might shew how *David* and *Joshua*, and all the other Holy Men of Old declared this Obligation upon them as Magistrates; but as at present I shall rather Argue from a Climax of Fundamental Reason of State, than bare Scripture-Proof, so I shall pass such Topicks by.

Propositions for the Necessity of Religion in States.

1. States are all Contracts, as all Contracts therefore depend Originally upon Religion, having no other Obligations; so 'tis plain that no State can have any other Basis than Religion.

2. That this is so irrisistible a Reason for the State's care of Religion, that one may add, that even Rebellion does not more ruin the Walls, than Irreligion the Foundation of States.

3. That it will also follow from hence, and as is indeed every day attested by Experience, not only that the more united the Religion of the State, the surer also must the State be, but that the better the Religion, the happier the State also; in truth Religion's the very Cement of States, and if that be naught, all's naught.

4. And lastly, Hence also it must follow, not only that a loose and absolute Toleration must be odious both to God and Man, but that the more divided the Religion in a State is, the weaker the State is; and that such States are naturally Self-murderers as do not take care to encourage any Religion at all.

The two Consequences therefore that follow from hence, are, 1st, That every State is bound, rather than fail, by a moderate force to encourage some Religion or other, and if possibly, the best.

2^{dly}, And that for the same Reason also they are as much bound to punish all manner of Atheism, Irreligion, and Libertinism, as any other Crimes whatever.

Propositions for the Necessity of one National Church.

1. As the Unity of Truth cannot let Magistrates love all Religions alike, so the Established Religion can be but one, and that both in Conscience and Interest too; since but to think of settling more, were equally unsincere and vain to their purpose.

2. That all States have this Power alike, and consequently may justly presume their Churches and Faiths to be right, when sincerely chosen by them, and consequently that all Subjects are bound, in Conscience at least, to assent in Peace to such Choice, if not Worship, for fear of worse consequences, and as the less ought to bear with and be ruled by the greater.

3. That all Men on the same Account may be justly required to contribute to the Religion of the State as much as any other Tax, and that be it what it will, since 'tis for the support of Religion in general, and not the particular Sect that they are bound to it.

4. That Hereticks and Schismatics for the same Reason may be justly kept under by moderate Penalties, both as they confound Religion and destroy its Unity, and consequently in the end the State together with it; and on this Account the Church and State are both bound in Conscience mutually to preserve and help each other.

5. That such also may be most justly debar'd from all manner of Power and Office in the State, and that if occasion, with the severest Penalties, lest by their mutual Jarrings, they not only endanger the Peace of the Church, but the State together with it.

6. That though many have cryed up an absolute Toleration of all Religions in contradiction of this, yet, as has been often and plainly experienced, it has been rather that they designed to wrest the Power for themselves, or that they have not cared for any Religion, and so endeavoured to confound all, than that they could pretend any Sense or Conscience for it.

7. And lastly, That therefore this seems but as a moderate and just mean betwixt the Tyranny of afflicting Tender Consciences on the one side, and the looseness of a Barbarous and Irreligious State of the other.

Rules for the Punishment of Irreligion, and Religious Offences.

1. That for the same Reason the State is bound to take care of Religion; Atheists and Libertines require immediate Banishment,

ment, as Men Outlawing themselves, and in truth I little doubt but that, did not their petty numbers and shifts protect them rather than their merits, they would find themselves generally served but little better.

2. That he that openly Blasphemes God, be treated as an Atheist; and he that publicly professes no Religion, as a Libertine.

3. That violent Hereticks and Schismatics be punished as Men that are Seditious, and Railing Controversers as Libellers without Religion should Apologize for the Disturbances they hazard, and which it should rather aggravate for the Abuse.

4. That if Men hold Dominion to be founded in Grace, that that is to dethrone the State by Principle, and that such Men deserve our Pity just as much as High-way Men, that Rob out of Conscience, and because that they think that all things ought to be in Common.

5. That Jesuits and Emissaries, who transfer the Supremacy, by the same Reason deserve just as much as Spies and Plotters, if not worse, a treble Retribution I mean, as Rogues by Principle are dyed of the deepest grain.

6. That beyond this, that to hinder Men from exercising their particular Religions, is either by a necessity to promote Irreligion, or if after, you force them to the Religion of the State, to oppress weaker Consciences, and make Hypocrites of them.

7. And lastly, therefore that on these terms, as the Jews of old did, if our Peace be not endangered, Children are not sacrificed, nor Beasts in time of Famine, even the very Heathens, much more Jews, Turks, and our Brother Christians of all sorts ought to have a full and free Enjoyment of their Liberty of Conscience amongst us.

Et floreat qui valet.

Objections that seem to deserve an Answer.

1. That you think this Force too little, and an Inquisition necessary. Ay, a fine way indeed to spoil all again by another such irreformable State as Popery.

2. But may be you'll say, this Force is too much; yes, yes, I know your meaning, you want an Upping-stock, Toleration has been always good with them that are undermost, though none have allowed it as you see when they have got uppermost.

3. But you Object, That in these Circumstances the State-Religion may yet possibly be undermined; ay, and in God's
Name

Name let her, if with all these Advantages she cannot preserve her self: 'Tis too great a Presumption to Complement all the Priests in *Europe* with to say, they are infallibly in the right.

4. That the State will fall with the Church upon it, and very right, without an exchange upon it in time it might; but on the contrary, in an exchange of Religions for the better, all States whatever in the end must needs thrive by it.

To conclude, that which bewilders Men in this case, is,

1. That the Religion of the State may possibly err, and that it will be hard to have it set up. And truly when Men can find a Church that does not, the Objection may be formidable, in the mean while, if we are bound to bear with the Infirmities and hearty Endeavours of one another, surely we may be full as Charitable with the State also.

2. That the true Religion has no particular Provision made for it here; right, and until we can convince all the World in particular what it is, we need not fear, with the Primitive Christians, thus to be so just as to let our Faith fight it out fairly among the rest by the plain dint of Truth and Holiness.

3. That many Conscientious Men may suffer hereby: But alas, that will no more be helped by a Lawless Toleration, that will debauch all Religion, and ruin all Government, than a modest Establishment; there always was and will be a War on Earth between the Servants of God and the Devil, and he is an *Utopian* Romancer that expects Peace till he is in Heaven.

Upon the whole, the Claws of Antichrist will hereby be clip'd, the Doctrines of Peace will no longer be propagated by Blood, but Tender Consciences will have an agreeable ease; and as every Church will be left to the modest dint of Argument, so the true Religion, be it where or what it will, will have all the Encouragement to be had with the Peace and Safety of the State, and more I presume she never wished.

I shall end all with a Jewish Story, related by Dr. *Taylor*, at the end of his *Liberty of Prophecy*: 'tis this, *Abraham* waiting at his Tent Door, as his Custom was, in expectation to Entertain some Strangers, invites amongst the rest an Old Man to come in to him, but afterwards when he came to Supper, and perceived that the Old Man prayed to the Fire for his God, what does *Abraham* do, but as zealously turns him out of Doors again. But what think you follows upon it? God calls to *Abraham* in the Night, and asks him, what he had done with the Old Man that

that he had sent him for his Guest? *Abraham* indeed relates the truth of the Fact upon it; but what says God to him for it? *What, have I born with him from his very Youth up to these Tears, and couldst not thou bear with him one Night?*
Go thou and do so likewise.

OF
 CATHOLICK COMMUNION,
 OR, THE
Neglected Duty of Unity in Publick Worship.

THE former Discourse having not only shewn how Essential Religion is to a State, but how Necessary its Union is also, the intent of the present is to demonstrate, that as the End cannot be without the Means, so that even every Private Man, as well as every State, is as much engaged to a Unity in the Publick Worship, as to Religion it self.

The Obligation to this Unity indeed, to the Publick and the Private Man is different; the one from Peace, and the other from Conscience, but surely both alike are sacred, and to both alike 'twould destroy all the good Effects and Benefits to be expected from Religion, instead of being inflam'd to Love and Peace by it, to have our Passions and Frailties only ting'd with the unhappy Zeal of Discord, to those miserable and desperate Effects that otherwise even Humanity would prevent.

Besides, in Publick Unity and Love, I may say, God's Worship is an Honour to him, but in endless Divisions and Animosities, a Contumely and a Reproach rather: What, can the God of Peace and Truth be delighted in perpetual Quarrels and Variances? Or do we not rather Blaspheme his Nature, when we think to please him with such Corruptions? And even so in the State also, Religion in Unity will assuredly prove the strongest Band of Concord, but in Sects and Schisms it has no other Fruit than perverse Wranglings and Destruction.

But

But add to these the Christian Obligations to a Publick Communion also, and then let us see how the matter stands. And thus,

1. Christ gave us but one new Commandment, to wit, *That we love one another*; and surely we are likely to be hopeful Disciples to him upon't, when we can't so much as agree to Worship together.

2. The Catholick Church, and the Communion of Saints, are even two of the Articles of the Apostles Creed; and can that Publick Unity in Worship be inconsiderable then, that was thought worthy even of being so doubly ranged in so constant and solemn a Profession?

3. That 'tis not only the express Promise of Christ, *That where two or three are gathered together in his Name, that he is in the midst of them*, to give a more particular Blessing to the Assembly of our selves, but St. Paul in the *Hebrews*, and otherwhere, orders even a *Cain's Mark* to be laid on those that cause Divisions, and omit to Assemble themselves with the Church, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *1 Cor.* 1. 10, 11. & *Cap.* 3.

4. That we may very well discern what our Sentence is likely to be for such Schisms and Divisions, by the Treatment of *Corab*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and our Saviour himself's calling the *Samaritans* Dogs, only for their Schism from the Church of *Jerusalem*, and which I am sure did not want Errors enough.

5. That 'tis one of the Prophecies of the Churches Corruption, that hereafter Men should cry thus, *Lo here Christ, and lo there*; and have itching Ears after Separations, and variety and novelty of Teachers. And should it not shame us then to stick at some trifling Puritan Knot, while we swallow a Camel in Separation, to the scandal of Christianity, and the scoffing of Jews, Turks, and Heathens?

6. And lastly, *Eusebius*, *Lib.* 6. *Cap.* 44. tells us, that 'tis not a less Martyrdom rather to bear Evils, than to dis-member the Church, than to dye for not Sacrificing to Idols. And I remember *Justin Martyr* has this very Expression of some that were *Socinians* in his time, in his Discourse with *Tryphon*, p. 207. For there are some Dr. Friends, said I, of our kind, who confess him to be the Christ, and yet hold him to be a Man born of Men. But pray, where is that Charity now, so to call a *Socinian* Dr. Friend, and of our kind?

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But the better to proceed in this matter, I shall range my following Discourse under these Five Heads.

- I. In shewing the Methods proper for such a Unity.
- II. In shewing the Duty of the State towards it.
- III. In refuting Modern Pleas for Divisions.
- IV. In proposing an Accommodation between them.
- V. In Answering Difficulties remaining.

General Methods to Unity in Publick Worship.

1. That in States Sister-Churches ought as near as possible to walk hand in hand with each other, whilst all Private Men, according to the Example of St. *Austin*, Conscientiously conform to the present Church they are under, be it where or what it will; indeed otherwise to expect the End without the Means is as endless as impertinent, and if trifling Variances and Errors may cause Schisms and Divisions with us, we have no means left to be at Unity.

2. As in Building a material House; we are forced to hew Stones to the Wall; so in the immaterial Temple of God's Church also, how can we expect any Structure to be made if there be not a mutual bearing between the fallibility of our own Judgments and the Church, but especially where the Church professes her self fallible.

3. That this bearing with Errors and Variances therefore in Churches extends to all manner of Faults whatever, provided the Church be Christian, and not Idolatrous; in truth all faults else, whether great by number or aggravation, are alike to be born with, or else Church-Community must and ever will be but a Chymera; for what Church is, ever was, or will be without Errors in variety? And what Age has wanted wicked Men enough to aggravate them to Divisions, if the World be not wiser than to follow them?

4. That though this Charity may look like a Cowardly trimming, especially in such a Factious Age as this, when there are almost as many Churches as Men, yet undoubtedly whoever will look on Church-Unity as a Practical Duty, and embrace it as such, with other Reasons than meer Partying, must do it on these grounds, or none; I am sure by the same Reasons we divide the Church now, we may divide it infinitely, and 'tis almost

almost a wonder there is any Communion at all left amongst us.

5. And lastly, but that nothing herein excuse Men in desiling themselves with Personal Tests, wherein we ought to dye, rather than deny the least Truth, and that thought in Complement to the best of Churches. And surely in this case the difference is clear enough, an *Algier's* Slavery in Religion is what cannot but offend every good Man; but a mutual bearing of Evils and Errors irremediable in Publick Communions, certainly is a Duty and Charity necessary, or nothing in Christianity is to be minded.

The Duty of the State towards Catholic Communion.

1. That as the State knows that God did not give Man his Reason only to be wilfully blind with it, or his Eyes, to put them out to see, as the Church of *Rome* would seem to say, by ordering an Obedience of setting Trees with their Roots uppermost, if commanded. So it is the particular Duty of the State, as to be supposed wiser than their Subjects, rather to let the Waves of Opinions have their full Channel in their largely extended Arms of Charity, like the *Sadducee* and *Pharisee* of Old in the Church of the *Jews*, than by becoming of any particular Party, to drive away all the Opposites from her.

2. And thus, what though a Man believes Transubstantiation or Purgatory? They are absurd Doctrines with hard Names it may be; but are we sure that even we our selves don't hold Opinions full as foolish of another kind, though not nick-nam'd? So, what though a Man's a *Socinian*? Cannot an Arch-Bishop hear a *Socinian*, and a Trinitarian dispute, as well as an High-Priest could a *Sadducee* and *Pharisee* of Old? Or what, may we I Worship with a *Socinian*, that at least makes Christ the greatest Prophet? When both Christ and his Apostles after him, could Worship even with those very Jews that decry'd him as an impostor.

3. And that on this Account also all those unaccountable Mysteries, and Niceries, and fondness of Words, that have hitherto corrupted Christianity so far from its Primitive Simplicity, as to make it even too fine and burthensome, either for our Wit, Memory, or Understanding, whether they be true or false, be all equally laid aside, without we have a mind by our Canting

Jure Divino's, and Infallibility in new-coin'd Doctrines, never to let the World have Peace for us.

4. And lastly, Therefore since Innovators in no Authority are to be regarded, and as it is both the particular Command and Example of Christ in such cases, rather to fear God than Man; so every State should rather study to become a tender bearing Father, and a Nursing Mother in the Church to ease feeble Minds, than if possible to hazard their Ruines, be it but with the appearance of dangerous Tests and Offences.

Modern Pleas for Schisms answered.

1. You say, that *Gal. 4. 14.* makes you angry at Holy days; I pray if it does, do not keep them then, no more than Christ observ'd *Corban* with the *Jews*: But must that make you leave the Church for Sundays therefore, when the *Corban* could not make him leave the Temple?

2. You say, *Gal. 4. 10.* makes you angry at Surplices too; and why not at formal Bands, and singular Cloaks as well? Nay, *Socrates Schol. Lib. 6. Cap. 20.* tells us of some that were angry that the Ministers wore black, since Christ himself wore white. But bless me! if the Church mayn't be left Master of all such Indifferencies for Decency, we may agree when we can. So,

3. You think that Godfathers too commonly take an Idle Oath in Baptism; and what then? The Oath is good in it self, and was of use under the Primitive Persecutions; and at present, is any obliged to be Gossip against his will?

4. But you are offended at Prayer by Form you say: Bless me, that Men can be so sick of Whimsies! if a Man Prays *Ex-tempore*, 'tis at least a Form to the Congregation; it seems then that 'tis the Priest only that must have none, for the People must have one all one, and too often none of the best neither. So,

5. You have the Spirit you say, and more Truth than others, and you are the fitter Member in the Catholick Church to shew your Zeal in mending it then; what, did the Prophets of Old go to set up other Churches, and make Partyings, only through their being holier than other Men? No, we don't hear so much as of one Sect that they made; indeed they were for Correcting the Old, not confounding us with New Foundations.

6. The

6. The Quaker also is angry at our gayety and vanity in fine Cloaths; ay, and so was *Isa* with the *Jews* of Old too; but would *Isa* therefore run out of the Church for it? Pray God, I say, their Spirit prove as good as his, I am sure it does not seem so by this and their late Quarrels of Christ within, and Christ without.

7. But you would have Presbyters instead of Bishops you say: Bless me, that Men should quarrel about words so! 'tis plain, the Presbyters would be as great as the Bishops if they could, and both alike are Scripture Names of Offices, and which many Judicious Men have thought to signify the same thing. The case then is, we can never agree to what the Scripture-Order of Government is, nor will we consent that the State should modestly decide the Doubt between us.

Lastly, but your Offences are not regarded, and therefore too you are further offended. Bless me, that Men can Argue thus! What, we have a Controversie about Bishops, and the Majority it seems are for them; and pray, what must the State in this case do, have no Discipline for fear of offending your two Scruples, or let the Offence fall on the least in Number? I say, to this *Dilemma*, No Discipline, and no Church; and therefore 'tis but as of Necessity that things should be as they are.

Our Natural Conclusions of Accommodation are,

1. That though all these pretences are groundless of a right-ful Separation from the State-Religion; yet that the State notwithstanding upon it is but just in removing those things that are ill among them, as well as the others are unjust to them in their needless Schism for trifles.

2. That accordingly our Pageantly Churches, too big to be heard in; our Cross in Baptism, our Orthodoxy in Ceremonies only may be very well laid aside; for though when Men are offended at us for good, we need not mind it, but rather in pity, with Christ, say, *Blessed is he that is not offended in me*. Yet when Men are offended at Indifferencies, and as the Apostle instances, in Meats offered to Idols, then by no means may we Lawfully continue to keep up their Offence. Nay,

That as we see by the Shew Bread that was eaten by David and his Men, and Christ's License to help out our Ox on the Sabbath day, that the more formal parts, even of Piety it self,

are to give place, where the more Essential or Necessary require; so sometimes even more than indifferent may be yielded, rather than come to Blood or Divisions: And thus you Baptize your Infant, on you eat the Lord's Body; but cannot you let another forbear therefore, as the Learned Dr. Taylor has it in his Liberty of Prophecy, rather than make him defile his Conscience?

4. So *Eusebius*, *Lib. 6. Cap. 19.* tells us, that in his time it was held, that Lay-men might speak in Churches; and that though even before Bishops, pursuant to *Nehem. 8. 4.* &c. *1 Cor. 8. 14.* *Luke 2. 46.* — *4. 15.* *Acts 13. 14.* — *17. 22.* and other Texts, shewing how that in that the Christians pursued the Jewish Discipline; and why not to be allowed now too as well, if a Congregation generally consent?

5. So some are for Praying standing you say; and why not, since the *Israelites* did but the same before? Twere decent indeed to have all kneel, but is not Unity more than Ceremony? So some are ignorant, you say; and what then? Did not the Apostles own some for Disciples, though they never heard even of the Holy Ghost?

6. That accordingly herein Ministers and Congregations of all sorts be left to their discretions; nay, and further, that in and about the City of *London*, and elsewhere, where the paucity of Churches may be of further Offence, that there be full Liberty given for the further Building of Churches, to be erected and ruled, as Congregations and Pastors shall by mutual consent agree.

7. And that farther, as well in such as all other Congregations, to avoid all manner of Offence, the Minister, with the consent of his Congregation, be allowed to Pray either by Forms or Extempore, as shall be seen most convenient, or to use Ceremonies or not, as they shall agree to let them alone.

To be short, a Comprehension in a Church like this, must not only needs cut off all grounds of Heresie in becoming so simple Apostolick, but withal force all Foreign Churches to joyne with her, and cut off all manner of colour and Foundation for Schisms and Divisions, I may say, all the mischief of a Factioning Toleration will be lost in this: And as the considerablest Heads of all Sects cannot but be contented with so innocent a State, I so I doubt not but that all the little scrupulosity which has so long confounded our Reformation, will in a very short time be swallowed up by it; and as by Natural consequence a real Schisma-

Schismatick and Heretick will become as odious to all by one consent as he was to the Apostles.

That which has bewildred Men here, has been,

1. That Men should be so heedless in their Divisions as they are, to break Communion for every Trifle as they have done; but as to that I can only say, when Men had once trespassed the true Bounds of their Duty in the Publick Unity in Worship, afterwards 'tis no wonder to see a whole Sea and Deluge of Sects and Schisms break in upon them; for how can they hold together, that have not the least Principle of Unity left; and that are linked with no other Chain than meer Faction and Party, at best a few criterion Tenets.

2. That the Grandeur of the Church will fall by it; and why so? wherein is its Grandeur but its Unity? But if you call your External Ornaments of Churches and Service, as in Cathedrals and Chappels, your Grandeur, why, can you say, it will be gone then more than now? A poor Church has no Choristers, no Lecturers, no Organs, no Altars, nay, and too often through a too hard impropriation, no Service neither; and why then should the want of a little of this Grandeur be so intolerable in the greatest Charity to weaker Brethren, that a little necessity and our own corruption can so easily dispense with?

3. That the allowance of such Practices will become a Reflection upon the State; ay, and a very good one too, for none can think any ill on't; we shall be united and firm at home, and our love and condescension praised abroad; and surely that we bear with Tender Consciences on no other terms but the Ancient and Apostolick Liberty and Practice, cannot have the colour of Scandal in it, when by it we but aim to abolish that real Scandal that is caused by our present Schisms and Divisions amongst us.

4. That 'tis hard, since the State is bound so far in Conscience to be obeyed by her Subjects about Religion, that yet afterwards where even they are to blame, she should stoop lower to them; and truly if the State were not our Father as well as our Master; I should say so too; but a Father by his Office bears with his Children, and has Patience with them; and therefore no wonder if I say, that since other measures have succeeded so ill, it should become a State even to stoop a little lower also, and to see, if possible, the utmost Lenity and Moderation can make them sick of their Factions; and especially since

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he cannot but perceive that his foolish Children cannot bear other measures, and what he has so long designed in vain for them.

5. That our Sectarists will never satisfy themselves, forsooth, about Episcopacy, Ordination, Administration of the Sacraments, &c. because they do not find nice and particular Directions in Scripture about them; fear not, Time and Patience will do much, when the Prejudice of Separation is once off from them, then the Argument, that the Church was established by word of Mouth, and corrected only occasionally by the Apostles in Writing, will be enough to persuade any reasonable Man I am sure, that they may justly let the consent of Churches fix those things in a discreet Order for the Glory of God; that the Holy Ghost for our Tryals thought not good to leave us a greater certainty in on neither side.

To conclude, God only knows how long his Temple will be trodden under foot thus through our unhappy Morrice-dance of Sects, but be it longer or shorter, this I am persuaded, when his time comes, like a Tide turned I believe he will move us as all at once to Unity, and then I know such a condescension as this will be admired; I know at first a begrudging Elder Brother may disdain thus to receive his Younger Brother in Raggs, but surely for all that, a true Christian Father will rather kill the fatted Calf, and kiss and embrace the poor Prodigal for joy of his Return, than begrudge him a Reception.

Glory be to God on High, on Earth Peace and Good-will towards Men.

The CONCLUSION.

THOU seest now, Reader, that I have finished as well Appendix as Treatise, the Treatise to lead every Man in his Private Capacity in Religion, and the Appendix, to shew all Men what their Relation to the Publick Church is, and both to bring thee to that Kingdom of God that has been too long esteemed, as well by Christians as Jews, to be of this World only: What remains then, but that I give thee two or three Reflections upon the whole, and conclude.

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The first is, that now thou hast read over this Treatise, and while it is fresh in thy memory, I would desire thee once more to peruse the Scriptures after it, and to examine them, and see how agreeable their main purport is to it; if thou art not a *Sad-ducee*, to laugh at an invisible state, or a negligent *Gallio*, that careth for none of these things, I am persuaded thou wilt be even amazed to see as well how harmonious and consonant this Treatise is to them, as to observe how strangely and widely the World have hitherto mistaken their true intent and purport.

The Second Reflection is, to think what a wonderful Obligation of Gratitude and Thanks thou art indebted to thy Maker in, as well in his giving thee a Talent of Life in Prospect of these Glories through his Son, as in his prolonging it, as he has daily continued to do, to the great encouragement of thy advance therein. Good God! what is Man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou shouldest not only give him Being, but thus continually attend him with the Sacred Assistances of thy Spirit to bring him at last to the enjoyment of thy own Glory.

My last Reflection is, that thou make a true use of these things; I pretend to no other Gift of Prophecy here than plain Reasoning, but thus much I dare be bold to foretel by it, that whether private Man or Church make their approaches to God, they shall never be accepted by other steps than these: Nay, and more, I'll dare say, let God have given us never so great Promises, or Encouragements for the sake of his Church, we shall never be the Men to receive them, nor enjoy the least benefit by them, unless thus with an exact and humble Obedience we make our Application according to his Will.

Christ tells us, *That if our Righteousness exceed not that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall never be able to enter the Kingdom of God.* And give me leave to acquaint you, without Comparisons, or entering the Lists with their Merits, we must have a Purity and a Piety, yea, and a Sincerity, and Self-denial as great and singular as the Glories of that Kingdom we seek for, if ever we expect to reach it. Our Saviour tells us, *That every Plant that his Heavenly Father hath not set, shall be rooted out:* And I must tell you, this alone is what is his Husbandry, and no wonder therefore that our other Methods have hitherto succeeded so ill, and will yet succeed worse, if we do not thus set about us to reform them.

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